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Presented by the Hon^ble
Judge Livingston, of New York
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PIETELTAS.

SERMONS

ON

Various Subjects:

WITH

A PREFATORY DISCOURSE

ON

Miſtakes concerning RELIGION,

ENTHUSIASM, EXPERIENCES, &c.

BY

THOMAS HARTLEY, A. M.

Rector of WINWICK in *Northamptonſhire.*

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TO THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE

SELINA,

Countess of *Huntingdon.*

MADAM,

I BEG Leave to present the following Work to your LADYSHIP in this publick Manner, as well in Acknowledgment of my being indebted to your Conversation for many things

in this Volume, as to add my Teſtimony of due Reſpect and Eſteem for a Character become indeed RIGHT HONOURABLE, by a diſtinguiſhed Zeal for the Goſpel of *Chriſt*: That this Zeal is according to Knowledge, and that of the beſt Kind, I can truly affirm, having found it profitable to many for Inſtruction in Righteouſneſs. But if, MADAM, you ſtand thus largely indebted to the divine Goodneſs for the Gift of Knowledge, your Obligations to the Same are ſtill greater for the Grace of Charity, as this is *yet a more excellent Way.*

The Narrowneſs that is obſervable in many *Chriſtians* (who in other reſpects

ſpects are of good Report) towards ſuch as differ from them in ſome particular Points of Doctrine or Modes of Worſhip, is not only a great Hindrance to their Perfection, but alſo a very unhappy Blemiſh in the Beauty of Holineſs, and owing chiefly to their reſting in the outward Courts of the Temple, and not entering into that which is within the Vail; for the more ſpiritual any Perſon is, the more diffuſive of Benevolence and Charity is the Heart of ſuch a one towards all the Members of *Chriſt's* myſtical Body: And this is well exemplified in that eaſy Acceſs to your LADYSHIP which the truly Pious of every Denomination are ſure to find: Such free Intercourſe of Chriſtian

Fellow-

Fellowſhip, ſuch unlimited Good-Will towards Men, as it is the moſt amiable Expreſſion of a Catholic Charity, ſo, I am ſure, it is bringing the higheſt Honour to any particular Church; for it bears the apteſt Reſemblance to that bleſſed Communion of Saints in Glory, where all human Diſtinctions are ſwallowed up in the Unity of the Spirit and the Bond of Peace; and where no other Preference takes place than what ariſes from Superiority in Holineſs and Love.

That you may go on, MADAM, in the ſame Strength of divine Grace to adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour in all Things, and to evince by your

your perſevering Example that Piety gives the trueſt Dignity and brighteſt Luſtre to Nobility, is the ſincere Prayer of,

MADAM,

Your moſt reſpectful

and moſt obedient Servant,

THOMAS HARTLEY.

PREFACE.

THE main Design of the Sacred Writings is to bring us acquainted with our loſt State, under the Corruption and Apoſtacy of the Human Nature by the Fall, and with our Redemption by *Jeſus Chriſt*. The Rules and Precepts laid down both in the Law and the Goſpel were given primarily to reſtrain us from Sin, which, as it was the Occaſion of our Ruin, ſo, if continued in, will be the certain Hindrance of our Recovery: And the Doctrines therein contained inſtruct us in the Nature of that Grace which bringeth Salvation, and teach us to turn to it as our only Help and Remedy: Thus in refraining from Evil, and being ſubject to Grace, we are in the way of practical and acceptable Obedience to all God's Commands. To deny that Man is by Nature wretched and ſinful argues extreme Ignorance or Perverſeneſs, and to affirm that he

came ſuch out of the Hands of his Creator is to contradict the Teſtimony of the Scriptures, and to charge God both fooliſhly and impiouſly: To deny therefore Original Sin, in the Senſe of our Church, is the moſt complicated of Hereſies, as it makes void the Covenant of Grace, and ſaps the Foundation of revealed Religion. Every one carries in his own Boſom a Witneſs to the Truth of this Doctrine, as every one finds in himſelf, in a greater or leſs degree, a want of due Love both to God and his Neighbour.

The Goſpel of *Chriſt* is a Diſpenſation of Peace, graciouſly calculated to reconcile us both to God and one another, but how it has failed in general of theſe bleſſed Effects, through the prevailing Power of Corruption and Sin, let the Annals of Church Hiſtory teſtify, which inform us how often *Chriſtendom* has been turned into a Field of Blood, and repreſent the horrid Barbarities of *Chriſtians*, ſo called, towards their Brethren, as equalling, and in ſome Inſtances exceeding, the tyrannous Hatred of perſecuting Heathens: And therefore all thoſe Prophecies which foretel the peaceable happy State of *Chriſt's* Church on Earth ſuffer Violence when

when expounded as already fulfilled: The outward Eſtabliſhment of *Chriſtianity* has in no ſufficient Senſe yet anſwered the glorious Deſcription, and conſequently they muſt refer to ſome future joyful Time when Men ſhall not only live ſafe under the Profeſſion, but alſo in the Temper and Spirit of the Goſpel: Then, and not till then, ſhall Nation ceaſe to lift up Sword againſt Nation, and they that are called by the Holy Name, depart from Iniquity and love as Brethren.

The bloody Sword of Perſecution hath indeed for ſome time ſlept in its Scabbard, but the Spirit of it neither ſlumbereth nor ſleepeth: The Animoſities that prevail among the ſeveral divided Parties of *Chriſtians* in the World are an indubitable Proof of this; nor can we heſitate to pronounce that they have War in their Hearts whilſt they ſharpen their Tongues like a Serpent, and ſhoot out their Arrows, even bitter Words. If we go to and fro among the outward Churches of *Chriſtendom*, and fix our Attention on the wrangling Diſputes of the Learned, and the bigotted Zeal of the ignorant Multitude, inſtead of ſaying, Lo here is *Chriſt*, or lo, there! we ſhall be tempted to ſay, that He is neither here

nor there, but that the whole is a Babel of Contention, and that were the emblematic Dove ſent forth from the Ark of God amongſt us, ſhe would find little Reſt for the Sole of her Foot; nay, to ſuch a Heighth have the Waters of Strife prevailed as ſcarcely to afford her an Olive Branch for a Token of Peace upon the Earth: Now where Envying and Strife is, there is not only Confuſion, but every Evil Work, Wickedneſs in High Places, and Wickedneſs in Low.

Great Pains and much Invention have been employed by Authors of different Perſuaſions to fix the Character of *Antichriſt* on this or that particular Church: Some of our own, learnedly wiſe in their Expoſitions of the *Apocalypſe*, have fancied that this Myſtery of Iniquity, in every Limb and Feature, is exactly and ſingly pourtrayed in the Biſhop of *Rome*; and ſome among the weaker of the Proteſtant Diſſenters, led by an educational Prejudice againſt Epiſcopacy, have divided the Hoof, and given one half to the Church of *Rome* and the other to the Church of *England*, not knowing that *Antichriſt* has no more to do with the Hierarchical than with any other

other Form of Church Government; that he is not confined to any particular Characters, Places, or Churches, but hath set his Foot on the Breadth of the whole Earth, and erects his Throne as easily in a Synod of Presbyters as in a Consistory of Cardinals: For wherever there is a thirst after earthly Dominion, or the Exercise of tyrannical Power over Mens Consciences; wherever the same Hands that deal out the mystical Body and Blood of *Christ* are defiled with the Wages of Unrighteousness; wherever those Hearts which should be Temples of the living God, and bear the Image and Superscription of the humble *Jesus*, are exalted in Pride above their Brethren; wherever any thing that is in Man, or can be of Man, usurps the Place of *Christ*, and robs Him of any Part of the Honour of our Salvation; and lastly, wherever Persecution hangs out her bloody Flag for the ravening Wolves to hunt and devour the harmless Sheep of *Christ*; whether this be at *Rome* or *Geneva*, among *Papists*, *Lutherans*, *Calvinists*, or others—There Abomination sitteth in the Holy Place — There *Cain* smiteth *Abel*—There *Antichrist* lifts up his Horn.

That is a common Error and fatal in its Conſequences to true Religion, which places more to the account of the outward Conſtitution of that national Church to which Men belong, than to the Life and Power of Godlineſs: Hence it is, that moſt of the Diſputes which have exerciſed the Pens and Patience of Writers and Readers, have been about the external Polity, the Ceremonies, or the different Opinions of this or that Church, rather than concerning the Fundamentals of *Chriſtianity*: and hence that in general People do not ſo much mean by *making Converts* the winning of Souls to *Chriſt*, and bringing them under the powerful Influences of Goſpel Salvation, as making them Proſelytes to ſome particular Modes of Worſhip, or to a certain Way of Thinking about Religion. That Sameneſs of Communion in Externals among *Chriſtians*, who are united in Spirit and Affection, is a deſirable thing no one can well deny; but that ſuch Agreement in all outward and acceſſary things is neceſſary or to be expected, ought not to be affirmed; * for

* The falling of the Church into a Variety of Opinions and Modes of Worſhip is impoſſible to be prevented by lawful Courſes, ſince infallible Guides and Prophets have diſap-

were

were People diveſted of that Pride, Selfiſhneſs, and Impatience which ſo indiſpoſe them for bearing with others, they might find that different outward Communions among *Chriſtians*, are as compatible with the Peace of the Univerſal Church, as different Bodies Corporate are with the Peace of a Kingdom: I ſpeak of ſuch Chriſtian Societies as build upon one Foundation, hold the ſame Head, and maintain no Principles contrary to the Eſſence of Faith or the Safety of Civil Government: Such different Families of *Chriſtians*, if the Expreſſion may be allowed, amicably diſſenting concerning leſſer Points, and applying St. *Paul's* Doctrine of Moderation about Meats and Drinks to the reſpective Subjects of their Difference, may have been permitted in the Church from the Beginning to ſerve as ſo many Checks one upon another to reſtrain from diſorderly Walking,

peared: Therefore it is a thing not to be condemned in itſelf; for under Diverſity of Judgments and Forms God may be worſhiped in Spirit and in Truth, as in the primitive Time by the Jewiſh and Gentile Chriſtian; which Variety offends not God, ſo that Obedience to Magiſtrates be firmly retained, and a Zeal for Holineſs more than for Opinions, and thoſe healing Principles of Charity be kept alive which cheriſh mutual Forbearance and Love to each other, under our different Apprehenſions and Modes of Worſhip. See *Bromley's* Sabbath of Reſt, Article MAKKELOTH.

to excite holy Emulations, to afford various Occaſions for the Exerciſe of Chriſtian Charity, to prevent Combinations to corrupt the Scriptures, or as a Means to preſerve or revive ſome precious Truth or Doctrine that might otherwiſe ſuffer Loſs: But tho' ſome or other of theſe good Ends may hereby be anſwered through the over-ruling Power of Providence, yet it would confeſſedly be making a bad Uſe of this Argument to form it into a Pretext for Diviſions entered upon through Wantonneſs, or to palliate the Guilt of cauſeleſs Schiſms grounded in Fondneſs for Novelty and Change.

What has here been ſaid in Favour of tender Conſciences well agrees with the Temper and Moderation of our excellent Church in this Matter; yet ſome, otherwiſe minded, object to all ſuch charitable Indulgence, That God is the God of Order and not of Confuſion: But the Application of this Text obtains no proper Place here, as Order is well conſiſtent with Diverſity, tho' not with Confuſion, nay Diverſity, in proper Diſpoſition and Arrangement, is in frequent Inſtances the very Beauty of Order; and ſuch Diverſity is viſible in all God's Works; every *Genus* of Animals and Vegetables

tables in their different Tribes bears Teſtimony to this Truth, and doubtleſs the Bleſſed Angels and Spirits of juſt Men made perfect belong to different Claſſes and Governments, according to their various Kinds and Degrees of Excellence, and their different Capacities for Glory: If Men therefore differ, let it be according to their Order and to the Will of God, and then all is well, the want of Unity in their Form will be no Hindrance to their Unity of Spirit in the Bond of Peace, and their Differences will become only as different Notes in a Pſaltery, whoſe Variety harmonizes in one melodious Tune of Praiſe to the Lord of all Lords, whoſe Wiſdom, Power, and Goodneſs are diſplayed with infinite Diverſity, tho' wonderful Order, throughout the Kingdoms of Heaven and Earth.

As the Word *Eſtabliſhment* is often uſed by ſome as a Plea for Uncharitableneſs, and ſuch a Conſtitution is too much reſted in by others as a proper Security for the Truth and Welfare of Religion: That we may not grow remiſs by our Advantage, and ſo become Loſers by that which was intended for our Benefit; that we be not high minded but fear, and not truſt in the Arm of Fleſh

Fleſh for our Defence, but in the living God, it will be proper on this Account, as well as to anſwer other Deſigns of this *Preface*, to conſider ſome of the various Changes and Revolutions that have happened in the Church ſince its firſt Alliance with the State. And here we ſhall do well to reflect, that the Eſtabliſhment of *Chriſtianity* under the Countenance and Protection of the Civil Power, great as the Bleſſing is in itſelf, is but an accidental Circumſtance, and no eſſential Property of a Chriſtian Church, ſeeing that we acknowledge thoſe to have been the pureſt Ages of it before it knew any ſuch Tutelage: For ſo it has happened, thro' the Malice of *Satan* and the Corruption of human Nature, that the pious and praiſe-worthy Care of Chriſtian Princes in providing for the Encouragement and Support of Religion and the Security of its Profeſſors, has been in many Inſtances diſappointed, and that by a moſt unhappy Reverſe of hoped for Conſequences, the Indulgence of its Friends has on many Occaſions proved more fatal to the true Intereſt of *Chriſtianity* than the Perſecutions of its Enemies. The Church which before, under all the Weakneſs and Diſgrace of Infancy and

and Sufferings, grew up as a tender Plant, and as a Root out of a dry Ground, yet bearing much precious Fruit, when tranſplanted into the richer Soil of an Eſtabliſhment, did ſoon lamentably degenerate: It waxed great indeed in the Sunſhine of Proſperity, and under the copious Showers of Royal Favour and Bounty, but its Fruitfulneſs was impaired thereby: She ſtretched forth her Branches unto the Sea, and her Boughs unto the River, but little elſe than Leaves were ſeen to grow thereon. No ſooner did Riches and Honours, *Satan's* laſt and moſt prevailing Temptations, flow in upon her than *Chriſtianity* began to wear another Aſpect, the hitherto inflexible Spirit of its Profeſſors gradually ſoftened into a Conformity to this World, and Chriſtian Simplicity gave Way to Earthly Policy: Eaſe and Affluence engendered Security, and whilſt Men ſlept in a falſe and fatal Peace the Enemy with a full Hand ſowed thick the Tares of Covetouſneſs, Ambition, and Worldly-mindedneſs in their Hearts, which grew up and choaked the good Seed. Henceforward, as Church Hiſtory informs us, was to be ſeen great ſtriving among Eccleſiaſtical Perſons for the higheſt Digni-

Dignities and richeſt Preferments, and much Pontifical Contention about Precedency and Juriſdiction: The Diſciple now wanted to be above his Maſter, and the Servant above his Lord: Nay, *Chriſt's* pretended Vicars began to aſpire at ſupreme Sovereignty over Princes, and to ſet the Foot of Church Power upon the Neck of Royalty.

Moſt Authors fix the ceaſing of miraculous Powers in the Church about the Time of *Conſtantine*; and the Reaſon commonly aſſigned for ſuch Diſcontinuance is, that being now under the Protection and Security of an Eſtabliſhment, ſhe no longer ſtood in need of thoſe extraordinary Seals and Atteſtations to the Divinity of her Original and Doctrines; whereas the Truth of the Matter in a great Meaſure lies here: The inward Gifts and Graces of the Holy Spirit were eminently poſſeſſed by the primitive *Chriſtians*; their ardent Love of God, their holy Imitation of the Life of *Chriſt*, their powerful Faith, their ſevere Diſcipline, their Deadneſs to the World, and their fervent Devotion, enriched their Souls with wonderful Communications of the Divine Energy; they were indeed Living Temples of the Holy Ghoſt, and *Chriſt* wrought

wrought in their Faith and by their Faith, and therefore many mighty Works did ſhew forth themſelves in them: But when *Chriſtians* forſook their firſt Love and became wedded to the Things of this World, they commenced Members of another Kingdom, their ſpiritual Powers departed with the ſpiritual Life, and conſequently the Effects ceaſed; ſo that from the Fourth Century downwards we meet with but few Miracles of public Notoriety that may be depended on.

Under this viſible Declenſion of *Chriſtianity* in the Spirit and Power of it, the outward viſible Church, conſcious that theſe Divine Signatures were departed from her, and that ſhe was no longer, in general, that pure, that chaſte, that heavenly Spouſe of *Chriſt* all glorious within, and marvellous in Gifts as before, began to deck herſelf in all the painted and pompous Ornaments of a gliſtering outſide Worſhip; magnificent Temples with much Imagery and Sculpture, were erected, and beautified with all that Man's Art and Device could project and execute; coſtly Veſtments, gilded Furniture, Croſſes of Gold and Silver decorated with precious Stones, ſtately

Wax Candles, *&c.* were introduced into the Churches, as well to feed the Pride of Man as to make a ſanctimonious Show, and to ſupply the want of the true Riches. It was now alſo that Men began to fetch their Divinity from the Schools, and to ſubſtitute human Learning in the room of that Wiſdom which is from Above, whilſt a Syſtem of Opinions, Diſtinctions, and curious Speculations on the one hand, and a gorgeous Ceremonial on the other, made up the Religion of the Times.

From this Glance of Things thus far, there is too much Reaſon to conclude that true *Chriſtianity* was far from gaining Ground from the Time of its Eſtabliſhment downwards, and that earthly Riches and Honours proved Means ill ſuited to advance the Intereſt of Evangelical Piety; nor is it difficult to point out wherein the Church, in theſe more early Days, miſtook her Province and loſt her Way; as alſo how much better ſhe would have conſulted her Safety and true Honour, if content with Protection and Support from the State, ſhe had more faithfully preſerved her Allegiance to Him whoſe Kingdom is not of this World, and not defiled herſelf with the Maxims, Politicks

ticks and Alliances that are only of this World, mindful of the Fate which attended the confederate Ships of *Jehoſaphat* and *Ahaziah*, at *Ezion Geber*. But the Lord, who never left himſelf without Witneſſes even in Times of the greateſt Degeneracy, and who raiſed up Prophets of old to recover the Apoſtate *Jews* from their Defections to Idolatry, has in all Ages of the Church called forth holy Men, animated with a pure and fervent Zeal for his Glory and the Good of Souls, to bear their publick Teſtimony to the Truth, and to reſcue Religion from Ignorance, Error, and Corruption: Accordingly we read of *Waldo* at *Lyons*, *Claude* Arch-biſhop of *Turin*, *Thomas à Kempis*, *Thauler*, *Wickliffe*, and others, either boldly proteſting againſt ſuch Innovations in Doctrine as had endangered the Foundations of Religion, or built thereon nothing better than a rotten Superſtructure of Wood, Hay, Stubble; or elſe leading the benighted *Chriſtians* of thoſe Times through the Darkneſs and Formality of an outſide Worſhip to Repentance from dead Works and a living Faith, to a Righteouſneſs and Truth in the inward Parts: nor ought we to think ſo uncharitably of thoſe who were out of the

Reach of their Inſtructions and Examples, as therefore to conclude that among them were wanting many holy Souls who, tho' in much Weakneſs and Superſtition, yet in Simplicity and true Devotion, found their Way to God, and were accepted of Him.

An Author of Church Hiſtory, who betrays no Partiality in Favour of the Aſcetic Life, gives the following ſhort Account of ſome *Britiſh* Monks who lived according to the Rule of St. *David*, at *Vall Roſine* in *Pembrokeſhire* *: "They were raiſed with "the Crowing of the Cock from their Beds, "and then betook themſelves to their Pray- "ers, and ſpent the reſt of the Day in their "ſeveral Callings. When their Taſk was "done, they again beſtowed themſelves in "Prayers, Meditations, Reading and Writ- "ing; and at Night, when the Heavens "were full of Stars, they firſt began to "feed, having their temperate Repaſt to "ſatisfy Hunger on Bread, Water, and "Herbs: Then the third Time they went "to their Prayers and ſo to Bed, till the "Circulation of their daily Employment "returned in the Morning. A Spectacle "this of Virtue and Continence! who altho'

* *Fuller*, in his *Church Hiſt.* Book VI.

"they

" they received nothing or any thing very
" unwillingly, yet were so far from wanting
" Necessaries, that by their Pains they provi-
" ded Sustenance for many poor People,
" Orphans, Widows, and Strangers."

To the above-mentioned Names succeeded, at some Distance, the illustrious Catalogue of Reformers both at Home and Abroad, who pared off many Errors and Superstitions from Religion, and exalted the Doctrines of divine Grace on the Downfal of Merits, Indulgences, and other lucrative Figments of Man's Invention: The People were now permitted to read the Bible; the publick Service of the Church was performed in a Language understood by all, and Persecution was no longer established by Law. Thus Light, Liberty, and Moderation, became the Glory of our excellent national Church: And tho' it be generally allowed that our Reformers went too far with *Calvin* in some particular Points, yet a Church so well ordered and modelled in the main of her Doctrines and Constitution had little Reason to complain of some few Tenets which in the Hands of moderate Men could do no Hurt to Religion. But to evince, how insufficient all outward Reformation is to attain its End where the

Heart is unrenewed by Charity and the Spirit of a ſound Mind; our Forefathers were no ſooner reſcued a ſecond time from the Yoke of Bondage in Q. *Elizabeth's* Days, but they entangled themſelves and diſturbed the Peace of the Church with Diſputes about the moſt indifferent Things, whilſt Opinions concerning the Preference due to this or that Service Book, particular Veſtments, bodily Geſtures, nay even the Figure and Situation of a Communion Table, proved of greater force to divide their Affections than their Agreement in fundamental Doctrines to preſerve them in Brotherly Love: And, as if on purpoſe to teach us, not to place our Strength and Confidence in any the beſt framed Conſtitutions, and to inſtruct us in our need of continual Watchfulneſs, in leſs than a Century *Arminianiſm* got footing amongſt us and met with Encouragement: The Dignity and Powers of the human Nature began to be more highly thought of than according to the Doctrine of our Articles, Men's Attention was called off from the Inſide to the Outſide of Religion, and more Pains employed to decorate the Form than to urge the Power of Godlineſs: Nor did it a little help Religion on its Way down-

down-hill, that ſome who talked loudly of Grace and the Spirit ſhewed themſelves Men intoxicated with the Dregs of earthly Policy, thirſting after temporal Dominion, and turning Faith into Faction. This ſerved to confirm Prejudices already conceived againſt Doctrines good in themſelves, but diſgraced by the Practices of ſome that held the Truth in Unrighteouſneſs: Add to this, that an overſtrained Rigour in ſome things, and an aukward Formality of Behaviour in many who aſſumed the Garb, but wanted the Life of Religion to give it Comelineſs and Grace, proved ſo diſguſtful to the oppoſite Party, that to avoid the Name of Preciſians they caſt off the very Appearance of Religion, and ſo turned Liberty into Licentiouſneſs: Every thing that looked like Piety was now termed Puritaniſm; Profaneneſs and the Love of Pleaſure knew no Bounds, and it was common to place more of Loyalty and Religion in drinking Bumpers to Church and State than in ſober Seriouſneſs. Politicks and Polemicks began now to have a great ſhare in the Religion of the Times, and this occaſioned a variable and time-ſerving Kind of Divinity: Thus the ſame Doctrine of paſſive Obedience and Non-

reſiſtance which was a diſtinguiſhing Badge of Orthodoxy in one Reign, was eliminated in the next: One while he was thought beſt affected to the Church of *England* who exclaimed loudeſt againſt the Church of *Rome*; and ſoon after a Spirit of Moderation appearing in Favour of ſcrupulous Conſciences, the Alarm was ſounded, that the Church was in Danger from a very different Quarter, and the Rage lately vented againſt the *Papiſts* was now turned againſt the Proteſtant Diſſenters: the groſs of the Eſtabliſhment eſpouſed the Quarrel, and parted themſelves into the nonſenſical Diſtinctions of High-Church and Low Church, whilſt a mad party Zeal ran away with the Charity of both ſides, and true Religion was loſt in the Scuffle.

The Enemies of revealed Religion triumphed at beholding theſe Animoſities and Diviſions in the Church, and from ſuch Inconſtancy and Change of Principles fetched Arguments in Favour of Infidelity. They conſidered the Clergy as labouring more to ſupport the Credit of a Party than the Intereſts of true Piety, and were tempted to think that nothing more was meant by Church, than that outward Conſtitution

of it from which they derived their Power and Preferments: And that which contributed to the Growth of Deiſm as much as any other Cauſe was the great Defection from the Doctrines of the Reformation: In the room of theſe, dry theological Reaſoning and Moral Eſſays had long before been ſubſtituted, and the Faſhion in this reſpect was not altered; the prevailing Divinity with many was a ſort of ethical, political, polemical Something that we have no Name for, a kind of *Chriſtianity* with little or nothing of *Jeſus Chriſt* in it; it came not tinctured with the Spirit of the Goſpel, and therefore produced no ſpiritual Effects in the Temper of the Times. How long this continued in Faſhion, or how much of it is ſtill left, I take not upon me here to affirm: However, we are bound in Juſtice to allow, that many excellent Names, with good Biſhop *Beveridge* at the Head of them, come in for Exceptions to the above Remark.

A learned Divine of the Church of *England*, in a Treatiſe publiſhed about the Time I am ſpeaking of, wherein he freely cenſures the Defect beforementioned, together with that erroneous Way of debaſing *Chriſtianity* to a Level with natural Religion

made uſe of by ſome celebrated Divines then living, and whoſe Writings are ſtill held in too high Admiration by many, expreſſes himſelf thus: "It is verily a Fault in too "many of the publick Teachers of our "Times, that their Sermons are moral "Harangues generally, as if they were "preaching at Old *Rome* or *Athens*, and "their Auditors were all Infidels: We ſee "the bad Effects of this on more accounts "than one: The conſtant inſiſting on no-"thing but Morality hath lately inſpired "Men's Heads with this Notion, that re-"vealed Religion is of little Conſideration "and Worth; and this hath been one "great occaſion of Deiſm." And a few Pages after: — "Since ſo many Preachers "have confined their Diſcourſes as to the "main, to Morality, there hath been leſs "Succeſs in Preaching than ever. There is "plenty of excellent Diſcourſes from the "Pulpit wherein the Nature of all moral "Offices is ſet forth, but notwithſtanding "this, there never was leſs Morality in Mens "Lives and Actions, which ſhews that "there is ſomething of a higher Nature "wanting, and that the bare inculcating of

"moral

" moral Duties and virtuous Living is not " ſufficient to mend Mens Practices *."

It muſt be allowed that there is too much Truth in theſe Complaints, and that the Strain of our Divinity has warped much from the Reformation Standard within this Century, as will plainly appear by comparing the Writers of both Times. We abound with learned and ingenious Diſcourſes on the Extent and Obligations of natural Religion, ideal Fitneſſes and Relations of Things, and the Beauty of moral Rectitude: But theſe ſerve rather to amuſe than amend the Age, and bring us no nearer to true *Chriſtianity* than an Hypotheſis in natural Philoſophy: Such airy Speculations have always proved too weak a Foundation for practical Piety, they want both Solidity and Authority. It is an unpardonable Error in moſt of theſe Writers, that they conſider human Nature as ſtanding in the Ability of a perfect Freedom, and therefore inſtead of leading the Soul to God in an humble Acknowledgment of its natural Impotence and Corruption, that He may help and heal it with renewing and ſanctifying Grace, they addreſs themſelves to a

* Dr. *Edward's* Preacher, Vol. I. p. 73.

ſuppoſed Sufficiency in Man, crying out — *Do this and live*, tho' where he may find Strength for the doing they ſhew not: Thus they turn the Covenant of Grace into a Covenant of Works, and ſend us to the Law for Juſtification; they make Reaſon, unenlightened Reaſon, our Guide, and Free-will our Strength, and ſo lay other Foundations than that which is laid in the Goſpel of *Chriſt*. The Social Virtues, and relative Duties muſt be urged, and urged Home too, for they confeſſedly make a conſiderable Part of our Buſineſs here; but then if we write to *Chriſtians* let us conſider them in their neceſſary Connexion with Goſpel Principles; let us repreſent them as only acceptable to God in *Chriſt* when founded upon a ſound Converſion generated by a living Faith, and accompanied with Humility, and the Love of God: In a word, they muſt be Chriſtian Graces exemplified in Practice and wrought in us by the Influence of the Holy Spirit, otherwiſe they cannot be called Chriſtian but natural Morality, mere civil Virtues, uſeful indeed in the preſent Syſtem of Things, but void of all Relation to the divine Life and the Kingdom of Heaven.

Another

Another Method of treating Divinity, too much in uſe with ſome, is that which conſiſts in curious and needleſs Speculations on the external Evidence of *Chriſtianity*, and in dry Appeals to natural Reaſon for the Credibility of it: Thus to hear it very elaborately proved that *Jeſus Chriſt* was no Impoſtor, and that his Religion is an Inſtitution that challenges the Aſſent of every rational Enquirer: To be entertained with nice Diſquiſitions on the Nature of Miracles, in order to ſhew that the Apoſtles did not do them by any Art of *Leger de main*, nor yet by diabolical Conjuration: To hear it made very plain, that they were downright honeſt Men, and that it is not at all likely that they had any Intention to deceive us in what they have related, *&c. &c.* However ſuch kind of Reaſoning may be allowed to take place in refelling the Cavils of Infidels, and putting to ſilence the Ignorance of ſuch fooliſh Men as ſtart ſuch fooliſh Objections, yet this way of Proof from the Pulpit is inept and futile, and ſo far from miniſtring Grace to the Hearers, or helping to build them up in the Faith, that it rather ſerves to ſuggeſt matter of Doubting in things whereof they made no Queſtion before. Curious

Enquiries

Enquiries in Religion have of late Years, in many Inſtances, been carried to a great length of fanciful Indulgence, giving birth to many unprofitable Queſtions, and been ſo far from anſwering any pretended Uſefulneſs in repreſſing the Spirit of Infidelity amongſt us, that it has greatly increaſed under it; which proves that theſe are not the Weapons that are mighty through God to the pulling down the Strong-holds of Unbelief, and to make Converts to the Goſpel of *Chriſt*. Does it not require much Patience to hear the Credibility of Goſpel Hiſtory meaſured by that Diſtance of Time at which any Age is removed from the firſt Publication of it; in which one Author * has gone ſo far as to aſſert, that at the Expiration of 3150 Years its Evidence will be quite extinct, and therefore *Chriſt* will come to Judgment before that Time. To invalidate the Proof of this Author, a late Writer on Miracles aſſures us, that the Evidence of *Chriſtianity* is ſo far from loſing any thing of its Force that it grows ſtronger by Length of Time, becauſe the Examinations of learned Men furniſh us with freſh Motives for believing, and becauſe the longer it has kept its

* Craig's *Theol. Chriſtianæ Principia.*

Ground

Ground the ſurer it ſtands. Can any thing be more trifling than ſuch whimſical Calculations? Can any thing more derogate from the Honour of the Chriſtian Religion than to ſubject the Credibility of it to the Inventions of learned Men, or to build any Part of its Evidence on ſo lubricous a Foundation as the Lapſe of Years? Does it not look as if we were ſadly diſtreſſed for Arguments in Favour of *Chriſtianity*, when its pretended Advocates have recourſe to ſuch airy Figments of a ſportive Fancy in order to ſupport it? Are not its old Foundations ſufficient to bear its Weight? Or muſt we ſtay till new *W——ns* ariſe to furniſh us with more freſh Diſcoveries to evince the Truth of the Bible?

Whither will the Affectation of Novelty, this Itch of ſaying or hearing ſome new thing, carry us? And how long ſhall we go on to gratify the corrupt Taſte of a vain Age, which ſeeks only Amuſement in Reading? Is it not high time to engage the Attention of Mankind on the Side of ſolid and important Truths, to take leave of our polemical and conjectural Divinity, and no longer deal out of that light Bread which ſatisfieth not? We have now of a long time been

been ſpeaking to the Head according to the Rudiments of this World, and in the Way that Man's Wiſdom teacheth, and we find the World neither the wiſer nor the better for it. Let us then lay the Axe to the Root, and level our Strokes at the Heart, break open the Fountain of its Corruption, uncover the hidden Myſtery of Iniquity in the inward Parts, ſhew Men their horrid Apoſtacy from God in the very Eſſence of their fallen Nature, and bring them to the loathing of themſelves by the Sight of their Vileneſs, Wretchedneſs, and Sinfulneſs, till they are forced to cry out with the Leper—Unclean, unclean! In this Part of our Miniſtry the Law of God does its Office, by holding forth a Glaſs that expoſes to full View our Nakedneſs and Shame, ſhewing us how we have joined actual to original Sin, and ſo added Iniquity unto Iniquity; here Conſcience is taught to plead guilty, and we are brought to ſubſcribe to the Equity of our own Condemnation, and to juſtify God in the Execution of the Sentence! The Pride of Man's Glory being thus ſtained with Diſgrace, and his Haughtineſs laid low by theſe and ſuch like humbling Convictions, the Soul begins to feel its Need of a Redeemer,

Redeemer, and the Mind is prepared for the Reception of Goſpel Truths better than by a thouſand Arguments of a metaphyſical Texture, or the moſt perſuaſive Eloquence of Man. A Fountain open for Sin and for Uncleanneſs in the Side of a crucified Saviour — The Offers of Pardon and Peace from a God willing to be reconciled to his rebellious Creatures in the Son of his Love — A free Tender of Salvation to poor loſt Sinners — Theſe are Truths which recommend themſelves emphatically. — They ſtand in no need of Help from human Learning to ſet them off, nay they are Subjects which would ſuffer Diminution from the moſt pompous Strains of Rhetoric. The Heart mollified by Grace and a tender Senſibility of its Sin and Danger, exults at the Sound of theſe glad Tidings, like the Child in the Womb of *Elizabeth* upon the Salutation of *Mary*; it is willing and deſirous to be ſaved in God's own Way, and therefore confers not with Fleſh and Blood about the Means or the Myſtery; it objects not, with *Nicodemus*—How can theſe things be! But ſilences every Doubt of carnal Reaſon with — *Lord, if thou wilt thou canſt make me clean — I believe, Lord help thou my Unbelief.*

belief. In this Obedience of Faith under Grace the Soul no longer makes Reſiſtance to the Drawings of the Father to the Son, and ſo receives the Spirit of Adoption, for as many as receive Him [*Chriſt*] to them He giveth Power to become the Sons of God. And in this Ground is opened the Doctrine of the New-birth, or God's ſpiritual Kingdom in the Soul, where *Chriſt* is repreſented as ſitting on his Throne and ruling with his Sceptre of Righteouſneſs in the hidden Man of the Heart, there doing the Office of a Refiner's Fire and of Fullers Soap, by cleanſing us from inward Pollution, and purifying us unto Himſelf a peculiar People zealous of good Works, and making us Partakers of his own Divine Nature.

Here we take a double View of Goſpel Salvation, *viz.* as it ſtands both in the Hiſtory and in the Myſtery. In the former is fully exhibited to us *Chriſt* the Lamb of God ſlain and offered up a Sacrifice for the Sins of the whole World, and raiſed again for our Juſtification: Herein is characteriſed that juſt one who fulfilled all Righteouſneſs and ſatisfied all Juſtice for Man by his active and paſſive Obedience; the Prince of Peace reconciling

reconciling God unto the World by the Blood of the Croſs; the perfect Pattern of immaculate Purity and Holineſs ſetting us an Example that we ſhould follow his Steps: In a word, the miniſtring, ſuffering, dying, and yet triumphant Saviour of the World. In the latter, *viz.* the Myſtery of the Goſpel, we ſee how Things inward anſwer to Things outward as Face to Face in a Glaſs, by a correſponding Work of the Spirit of God in our Souls. Thus we are baptized into his Sufferings and made conformable to his Death by the Energy of divine Grace, ſlaying in us the Body of Sin, and crucifying the World unto us and us unto the World: Purſuant to this we are riſen again with *Chriſt* unto Newneſs of Life by the quickning Power of his Reſurrection, for being planted together in the Likeneſs of his Death, we ſhall be alſo in that of his Reſurrection. In like manner as *Chriſt* was in his outward Office the Miniſter of Reconciliation betwixt God and us, ſo is he ſtyled the ſame by his ſpiritually dwelling in us: "If being "Enemies we were reconciled by his Death, "how much more ſhall we be ſaved by his "Life," *i. e.* by the Life of *Chriſt* manifeſted in us, which the Apoſtle calls "the "Riches

" Riches of the Glory, (or exceeding rich " Glory) of the Myſtery of the Goſpel, *viz.* " *Chriſt* in us the Hope of Glory." And as our Peace is aſcribed to the Blood of the Croſs, ſo is Peace of Conſcience to the cleanſing Blood or life giving Virtue of an inward and Spiritual ſprinkling: Thus all Righteouſneſs and Peace are fulfilled both externally and internally, and *Chriſt* is made unto us compleat Redemption.

Were it not that we are in general ſo much accuſtomed to hear and read and think of Religion only as ſomething without us, or as ſomething to be done by us, we ſhould readily ſubſcribe to the following Truths delivered by the moſt Rev. *John Arndt*, in his Book of *True Chriſtianity*, Ch. VI. " Foraſ- " much as the Subſtance of the Chriſtian Re- " ligion conſiſts in our Regeneration, or the " ſpiritual Renovation of the Mind, it was " the Will of God, that thoſe things which " ſhould be tranſacted in Man ſpiritually " and by Faith, ſhould be alſo outwardly " ſet forth in Writing, and in the Words of " Scripture: For ſince the *Word* is the Seed " of God in us, it is neceſſary that it ſhould " ſpring up and bring forth ſpiritual Fruit " in us: By Faith muſt that be effected

" within

" within us which the Scripture declares " in the Letter without us: If this Effect " doth not follow, then 'tis plain that the " Word is ſtill unto me a dead Seed, and an " Embrio deſtitute of Life and Motion: " Hence in Faith and in Spirit I ought to taſte " and to ſee the Truth of the Scriptures: " for when God manifeſted his Will therein, " He did not deſign that it ſhould be buri- " ed in Paper and Ink, but that in Faith " and Spirit it ſhould ſpring and grow up in " us to another Man, even a new and in- " ward Man: The Reaſon is, becauſe all " is to be fulfilled and performed in Faith " and Spirit whatſoever the Scriptures do " outwardly teach." He then goes on to exemplify this Truth in many Particulars, and concludes as follows: " The Sum of " all is: The Holy Scripture doth outward- " ly bear Witneſs to all thoſe things which " by Faith ought to be fulfilled in Man: " They deſcribe that Kingdom of God in " the Letter which muſt receive its Accom- " pliſhment in the Spirit; it deſcribes *Chriſt* " from without who muſt live within me by " Faith; it deſcribes *Adam* in his Fall and " Reſtoration, which I muſt find in my- " ſelf; it deſcribes the new *Jeruſalem*,

" the new Birth, the new Creature, all " which I muſt have ſome Experience of, " or elſe the Scriptures will profit me no- " thing: Now this is all of Faith, it is the " Work of God, and the Kingdom of God " in our Hearts." *Chriſtianity*, thus conſidered in a ſpiritual View, and conſequently in its true Relation and Benefit to the Soul of Man, comes repreſented in a way ſuitable to its Dignity and Uſefulneſs, and is properly diſtinguiſhed from that ideal or external thing which ſo commonly uſurps its Name; making known to all Men, that the Perfection of that Religion which bringeth Salvation conſiſteth not in Notion and Speculation, but in Spirit and in Truth; not in Form but in Power; not in Opinion called Orthodoxy, or in bodily Exerciſe, but in Experience and Change of Nature; and that no Creeds nor Syſtems of Divinity, no particular Schemes or Modes of Worſhip, have any other Excellency or Help in them for us, than as they are proper Means to produce or cheriſh the Life of God in the Soul of Man.

The Reverend Mr. *William Law*, in ſome of his excellent Treatiſes*, has expli-

* See his *Appeal to Deiſts*, &c. Treatiſe on *Regeneration*, and *Spirit of Prayer*.

cated

cated the Doctrine of the new Birth with uncommon Penetration, and ſhewed with great Solidity, that the Whole of our Salvation is grounded in it and riſes from it: He has with a convincing Sagacity reſcued this moſt important Myſtery of our Redemption from the Errors of particular Syſtems, and the learned Ignorance of verbal Critics; opened the Nature of original Sin thro' the Fall in ſo rational and ſatisfying a manner, as fully juſtifies this Doctrine of Scripture againſt the moſt acute Objections of cavilling Infidels; and at the ſame Time refuted that irreverent, but common Notion of the Divine Majeſty's being actuated by a Spirit of vindictive Wrath in his Proceedings againſt fallen Man. He has likewiſe therein ſhewed what we are to underſtand by the Wrath of God with reſpect to Man, even that horrid, dark, anguiſhing State of his Soul, which is its proper Condition and Nature as ſeparated from the Divine Life and Image, and which can only be reſtored by a Birth of the Son of God in its inmoſt Eſſence, and ſo becoming a central Source of Light and Meekneſs, of Love and Joy therein: that the Reaſon why the Unregenerate do not feel

themſelves in ſuch a State of Woe and Torment in this Life is, becauſe the Soul, during its Union with the Body, qualifies or unites with the Gratifications of Senſe, the cheering Influences of the Sun, and other Satisfactions of outward Nature, which charm its Miſery for the preſent *; but that upon this Conſtitution being diſſolved, and all its Communication with the animal Life and the elementary Kingdom of this World ceaſing, the Soul ſo unredeemed loſes every Source of Mitigation and Comfort, and falls into its own proper Hell, deſcribed in Scripture by the never-dying Worm, and the unquenchable Fire. From this Explanation of the Doctrine before us, the gracious Method of our Redemption by *Jeſus Chriſt* in the way of our Union with Him, and receiving a Divine Nature from Him, preſents itſelf as the ſole poſſible Remedy of Man's Miſery, the only conceivable Ground of his Salvation: it ſets forth God's Love to all without Partiality, in providing a Saviour for all under every

* Thus it is credible, that the very Devils find ſome Mitigation of their Torment by uniting with the Bodies of Men and Beaſts, which is the probable Cauſe of their great Deſire after ſuch Union, as in the Caſe of the Swine, *Matth.* viii.

Diſpen-

Diſpenſation, and repreſents *Jeſus Chriſt* as that Saviour in the moſt intimate Relation to us that can be, even as that quickning Spirit which is the Soul's true and only happy Life. All the Difficulties that embarraſs our common Methods of Reaſoning with Unbelievers on the Subject of our Redemption vaniſh before this Explication of it, as it likewiſe vindicates the Honour and Goodneſs of Almighty God from that profane Charge of his being the Author of Man's eternal Miſery thro' ſuch Want of Compaſſion and Forgiveneſs as is declared to be an Offence againſt God in ourſelves; for it proves to a Demonſtration, that everlaſting Death is no arbitrary Infliction of the God of Love upon Man for Sin, ſeeing that He has done all that could be done to prevent our Ruin, but that it is the natural and neceſſary Conſequence of Sin choſen, loved, and perſiſted in, and of Grace and Salvation rejected. If the Reader is not ſatisfied with this Author's Manner of treating theſe Subjects; as his Writings are abundantly ſufficient for its Defence, I refer him in particular to his Treatiſe, intituled, *The Way to Divine Knowledge*, in which he has obviated moſt of the material Objections

that can be brought againſt it. Upon the whole, this Author's Works are excellently well calculated for Uſefulneſs to many different ſorts of Readers, and to promote Piety in all. His *Serious Call* and *Chriſtian Perfection* contain very affectionate Addreſſes urged with the moſt cogent Motives to this End, and are liable to no other Objection than what is natural for Perſons of too relaxed a Piety to offer. His *Anſwer to the Plain Account, &c.* is a judicious Confutation of that groſs and fundamental Error, which conſiſts in placing Religion more in the outward and viſible Sign than in the inward and ſpiritual Grace. *His Appeal to Deiſts, &c.* proves with great Force of Reaſon, that the Oeconomy of our Redemption by *Jeſus Chriſt* is no poſitive or arbitrary Inſtitution, but a Diſplay of infinite Love and Goodneſs according to the Laws and Conſtitution of eternal Nature. His *Anſwer to Dr. Trapp* is a juſt Correction and Repreſentation of the *Folly, Sin, and Danger* of cautioning a careleſs World againſt being *Righteous over much:* And his ſubſequent Writings do, according to their ſeveral Subjects, aſſert the Honour and Dignity of the Chriſtian Religion as a

Divine

Divine Nature and Life, againſt the dogmatical Dullneſs of the Sophiſt; the artificial Pedantry of the literal Sciolift; the malevolent Narrowneſs of the Bigot; and the infectious Oſcitancy of the Formuliſt. A Perſon of high Character and of a penetrating Judgment in Divine things (whoſe Name would give Authority to this Remark) in a Letter to a Friend, ſpeaks of Mr. *Law's* Works as follows: "They are "certainly ſome of the beſt things for well "diſpoſed Minds to read that I ever met "with — They lead out from *Babel* and all "the Deluſions of a Sectarian and Party "Spirit in Religion; and I find them the "only Books for the ſenſible Deiſt." It muſt be owned, that in his latter Writings there are ſome things of an uncommon Texture, which ſuit not the Apprehenſion or Turn of every Reader: but then let it be remembered, that as one Part of his Buſineſs lay with the ſubtle Deiſt, who, ſheltering his Infidelity behind the Intrenchments of Philoſophy, bids Defiance to Revealed Religion, it would have been inept to argue with ſuch a one from Principles which he abſolutely denied, and therefore he found it beſt to force his Lines, and to engage him

upon his own Ground: And here he proves that to be no other than a deceitful Reaſon and a falſe Philoſophy that furniſhes Arguments for Infidelity; and ſhews that *Chriſtianity* receives Illuſtration and Evidence from that true Philoſophy which is the Light of God in the Soul, making manifeſt Himſelf and his Works both in material and ſpiritual, in temporal and eternal Nature, and which is profitable, as well to eſtabliſh the Faith of the Believer as to put to ſilence the Ignorance of fooliſh Men. I ſhall conclude theſe Remarks with the Author's own Words, in his *Way to Divine Knowledge*, p. 246.

" Let not the genuine, plain, ſimple, " *Chriſtian*, who is happy and bleſſed in " the Simplicity of a Goſpel Faith, take " Offence at this Myſtery, becauſe he has " no need of it; for it is God's Goodneſs to " the diſtreſſed State of the Church, fallen " from the Life and Power of Goſpel " Faith, and groaning under the Slavery, " Darkneſs, and Perplexity of bewildered " Reaſon and Opinions.

" Neither let the Orthodox Divine, " who ſticks cloſe to the Phraſes and Sen- " timents of Antiquity, reject this Myſtery

" as

" as heretical, becauſe it opens a Ground " of Man and of the Divine Myſteries not " known or found in the primitive Writers: " For this is the very Reaſon why he " ſhould thankfully receive it with open " Arms, as having and being that very " thing which the diſtreſſed, divided State " of the Church now ſo greatly wants, and " yet did not want till it was fallen from " its firſt Simplicity of Faith: For whilſt " Faith and Life defended the Myſteries " of Religion, the Ground and Philoſophy " of it was not wanted: But when Ortho- " doxy had given itſelf up to Reaſon, and " had nothing elſe for its Support but Rea- " ſon and Argument from the Letter of " Scripture, without the leaſt Knowledge " of the firſt Ground of Doctrines, then " it could only be defended as it is defend- " ed in every Sect and Diviſion of the Chriſ- " tian World."

And here we cannot ſufficiently admire and adore the Divine Goodneſs in raiſing up ſuch Lights and Helps as are beſt ſuited to the Needs of his Church in every Age and Circumſtance of it: Our own Obligations in this Particular call upon us for large Returns of religious Gratitude: We have

ſeen

ſeen *Chriſtianity* not only defended with invincible Strength againſt its Enemies, but reſcued from Errors of Ignorance, and a dead Formality no leſs dangerous than open Infidelity. We have our ſkilful Workmen of different Denominations that need not be aſhamed; ſome demonſtrating in a Method of Proof not to be gainſaid, that the ſacred Truths of our Religion have their ſure Foundations in the Depths of a Divine Theoſophy: Others by apt Analogy between Things Natural and Divine, added to profound Skill in the original Language of the Old Teſtament, pouring Light on the Myſteries of the New: A third Sort urging evangelical Doctrines in Demonſtration of the Spirit and of Power, to the Conviction and Converſion of their Readers and Hearers: And laſtly, ſome enabled by long Experience in ſpiritual things to help the *Chriſtian* on his way thro' the ſecret myſterious Paths of that Life which is hid with *Chriſt* in God. The chief of theſe both in Number and Strength we challenge for our own — Members of the ſame Communion — Sons of the Church of *England*, and an Honour to our Church: For are they not faithful Soldiers of *Chriſt*, mighty thro' God to fight the Lord's Battles,

and

and ſuch as both defend and adorn it by their Faith, by their Doctrine, and by their Lives? But what kind of Reception and Encouragement have many of them met with from us? Have we given them the Right Hand of Fellowſhip, and the Honour due to Champions for the Truth, and Men of Renown? Or have we not given them Cauſe to complain that they have been wounded in the Houſe of their Friends? Have not opprobrious Names and Diſtinctions been faſtened on them to make them paſs for Sectariſts and Schiſmaticks? Has not every Door to Favour and Advancement been ſhut againſt them, and, whilſt Church Preferments are daily ſold to the higheſt Bidder like Fiſhes in a common Market, have we not ſeen ſome of them ſtarving in little Schools, Curacies, and Lectureſhips, or depending on occaſional Benefactions for their Subſiſtence? And have we not ſeen of theſe able Miniſters, not of the Letter only but of the Spirit alſo, ſupplicating Votes to be received for their Paſtors by thoſe who, had they known their true Intereſt, would firſt have ſought this Honour and Bleſſing of them; and have we not ſeen them ſupplicate in vain? Theſe things

ought

ought not to be ſaid, if theſe things were ſo: But it is not the Deſign of this Preface to be particular. O when ſhall we learn to diſtinguiſh better! When ſhall we rightly know the Things that belong unto our Peace!

What Cauſe ſhall we aſſign for that Oppoſition to Goſpel Truths that appears amongſt us, and for that Diſlike to thoſe who urge the Neceſſity of Regeneration and of the Spiritual Life? The true Reaſon is nigh at hand, tho' others are pretended: Such Doctrines are contrary to the Maxims and Principles that govern the Hearts and Conduct of the Children of this Generation, are at Variance with the falſe Intereſts of Fleſh and Blood, declare open War againſt the Kingdom of Self, and ſtrike at every thing that is moſt near and dear to corrupt Nature; and therefore carnal Men of every Denomination think themſelves concerned in Character to oppoſe and diſcredit ſuch a Repreſentation of *Chriſtianity*. They can be zealous for Opinions, Forms, and an external Worſhip of any kind, becauſe theſe leave them in quiet Poſſeſſion of their Ambition, their Covetouſneſs, their Love of themſelves, and their Love of the World: They

They can readily take up a Profeſſion of Faith in a ſuffering Saviour, nay bring themſelves to truſt in an outward Covering of his Merits and Righteouſneſs for Salvation, becauſe this coſts them nothing; but to be cloathed with his Spirit of Humility, Poverty and Self-denial; to renounce their own Wills in his Lowlineſs, Meekneſs, and total Reſignation to the Will of God, to mortify the fleſhly Appetites; to be crucified to the World; to ſtrip themſelves of all Complacency and Satisfaction in thoſe Endowments, whether natural or acquired, which appear great and glorious in the Eyes both of themſelves and others; and, in a word, to take up their Croſs, and nakedly follow a naked *Chriſt* in the Regeneration: — Theſe are hard Sayings, they cannot bear them: But Wiſdom is juſtified of her Children: unacceptable as theſe Doctrines are to others, yet to them, and in them too, they are the Power of God, and the Wiſdom of God. It was by ſuch Fooliſhneſs of Preaching that *Chriſt's* Kingdom firſt prevailed over the Kingdoms of this World, and it muſt be by the ſame Doctrine, under the Influence of the ſame Spirit, that we can only hope for its Continuance

ance to the End of it. Evangelical Preaching is the moſt proper Means of producing Evangelical Fruit, ſuch as a living Faith in *Jeſus Chriſt*, Heavenly-mindedneſs, and Holineſs in the inward Parts; and unleſs the great Goſpel Doctrine of Regeneration be mainly inſiſted on, the People in general will be ſo far from ſeeking a new Nature, that they will not know that they want it: But theſe Truths affectionately urged enlighten the Underſtanding, convince the Sinner, warm the Heart, and through Grace are powerful to convert and change it: And accordingly we find, that where this great Myſtery of Godlineſs, God manifeſt in the Fleſh and revealed in the Heart by his Spirit, is preached with Energy, and from an inward Experience of its Power, the Word prevails mightily, and is received into every fitly prepared Heart, not as the Word of Man, but, as it is in Truth, the Word of God, who ſtill bears Teſtimony to the Word of his Grace with Power from on High.

That the Doctrine of Regeneration, or a new Spiritual Birth of a Divine Nature in the Soul, together with other Matters of inward Religion, as well as they that preach them,

them, have of late Years fallen under the Diſgrace and Reproach of Enthuſiaſm with many will not be denied: But that this Charge is nothing new, or contrary to what might be expected, the pious Mr. *Burkitt* declares, in his Note on that Paſſage in St. *Mark* where ſome are ſaid to have gone out to lay Hands on our Lord, ſaying that He was beſide himſelf, "Learn "hence (ſays Mr. *Burkitt*) that the forward "Zeal and Diligence of *Chriſt* and his "Miniſters in Preaching the Goſpel, is "accounted Madneſs and Phrenſy by a "blind World: But they may ſay with "the Apoſtle, *If we be beſide ourſelves, it is* "*unto God.*" And in his Note on theſe laſt Words (2 *Cor.* v. 13.) he obſerves as follows, "Wicked and carnal Men account "and repreſent the holy Servants of God "as a ſort of Mad-men: Workings of "Grace are ſometimes ſo far above Reaſon "that they ſeem to be without Reaſon. "There are ſeveral Acts of Holineſs which "the profane World eſteems as Madneſs, "as eminent Self-denial, great Serioufneſs "in Religion, their burning Zeal, their "holy Singularity, their Fervors of Devo-"tion, their Patience and Meekneſs under

"Sufferings

"Sufferings and Reproaches. All theſe "Acts of Holineſs repreſent the Saints as "Mad-men to a carnal Man." I ſhall dwell the longer on the Article *Enthuſiaſm*, as well becauſe a late Author has availed himſelf of the common Acceptation and Abuſe of this World to ground thereon his irreverent and profane Treatment of the Myſteries of the Divine Life, and to caſt Reproach upon every thing that is inward and experimental in Religion, as becauſe it will open the way to ſome uſeful Inſtructions for the common Reader.

As the Word *Enthuſiaſm* is frequently miſapplied, becauſe little underſtood, it will be needful to ſettle its Definition and Kinds, in order to fix its Senſe: For want of due Preciſion herein many confound different Kinds of Enthuſiaſm widely remote from each other, tho' their Reaſon for this is oftentimes eaſy to diſcover: The Word, according to its preſent vulgar Uſe, anſwers well enough the Purpoſe of Reproach, and as few Perſons have Diſcernment ſufficient to ſee the Miſapplication, the Odium intended eaſily falls upon the Perſon or Doctrine they are pleaſed to connect with it. But if this Word is ſometimes

taken in an ill Senſe, it has alſo a good Meaning belonging to it, as will be ſhewed in its proper Place; and in the latter Senſe, to uſe the Words of a learned Author, "A "Spice of Enthuſiaſm is no unreputable "thing, ſeeing that a Man ſeated on this "Bench finds himſelf in very good Com- "pany, ſome of the greateſt Philoſophers, "Prophets, Legiſlators, Doctors, Fathers, "and Saints in all Ages being confeſſedly his "Aſſeſſors."

Enthuſiaſm, as it reſpects Religion, divides itſelf into a threefold Diſtinction, all agreeing in the Sameneſs of the Object, but differing in the State of the Perſons who are the Subjects of it. I ſhall conſider theſe three Kinds under the ſeveral Epithets, malignant, mixed, and pure.

One Species of a malignant Enthuſiaſm and that the moſt common, conſiſts in a blind intemperate Zeal for ſomething called Religion, of any Denomination, under the imbittered Fury of a Party Rage, directed by the untutored Paſſions of the animal Man, and ſtanding in all the Depravity of corrupt Nature. It can look no farther than Names and ſenſible Things, and therefore treats with Contempt the Myſteries of

the Divine Life, is an utter Enemy to all Spirituality in Religion, and uſes the Word *Sanctified*, as applied to Perſons, only as a Term of Deriſion, appropriating Sanctity to Places, Buildings, Veſſels, or Veſtments: But tho' its Zeal be exerciſed on nothing better than Ceremonies, Names, and ſenſible Objects, yet it is no leſs intereſted in their Defence than if eternal Salvation entirely depended on them, and therefore ſuch as come under this Predicament are ready upon the leaſt Preference given to the Eſſentials over the Circumſtantials of Religion to cry out as loudly as the Men of *Epheſus* for their great *Diana*. If ſome Notions about Doctrines enter into this kind of Zeal, as Charity is wanting, they only ſerve to inflame it the more, whilſt they go about to ſanctify their Wrath with the Pretence of contending earneſtly for the Faith. The mad Knight Errantry of the Cruſades was ſtrongly tinctured with this Spirit of Enthuſiaſm, and likewiſe all Wars in every Age that have been entered into for the Propagation of Religion; and ſuch Madneſs unto the Death has been fancied Martyrdom. Now as this kind of a wild-fire Zeal greatly inflames the unmortified Paſſions, the Devil

Devil finds an eaſy Acceſs thro' it to the Heart, where he reigns with uncontrolled Dominion, and is properly and truly Abomination ſitting in the Holy Place, even that Place which ſhould be a Temple conſecrated to God, and the peaceful Manſion of the Spirit of Love: And this is deſervedly called a malignant Enthuſiaſm from the Effects it produces, as Variance, Wrath, Strife, Wars, Perſecutions, and Maſſacres on account of Religion, Men acting the Part of Savages one by another at the Inſtigation of the Devil, and calling the Murder of their Brethren the doing God Service. All ſuch Profeſſors, however they may boaſt the Antiquity of their Church, the Excellency of its Conſtitution and Diſcipline, or the Orthodoxy of its Creed, do notwithſtanding fall greatly ſhort of the Religion of good Heathens, and we ſcruple not to pronounce that *Plato* and *Plotinus* had a far better Faith and Practice. The learned Dr. *Henry More* * ſpeaking of the Illumination of certain Theoſophiſts, which he attributes to natural Light and a complexional Philanthropy, expreſſes himſelf thus: "This Illumination of the Theoſophiſts

* See his *Divine Dialogues*.

" is not so contemptible but that they justly " magnify it above the grim Ferocity of " the superstitious Factions in the embitter- " ed Churches of the World, who have " not so good an Inspiration as this, but " their Tongues and Hearts are set on Fire " of Hell. This Light of Nature, I say, is " abundantly well appointed both for Right " and Skill to chastise and reproach the gross " and grievous Immoralities of hypocritical " Religious, and to be subservient to that " Truth and Life that is really Divine."

Is there any need to justify the Doctor's Remark, or to prove that mere human Virtues founded on natural Benevolence are preferable to a persecuting and therefore false *Christianity?* How even Reformation has been deformed by this Antichristian Leaven in some who have boasted in her Name, a moderate Acquaintance with Church History will make appear, and sadly shew how the same Spirit of Wrath and Bitterness which, in the Form of *Popery*, burnt the *Protestants* in Queen *Mary's* Days, soon after crept into a better Form, and hunted down the *Puritans* in those of Queen *Elizabeth:* And when Presbytery got into the Chair of Authority, the same evil Genius,

nius, dreſſed in a new Cloak of Reformation, forged the Fetters of a new Uniformity, and laid the Axe to the Root of Epiſcopacy. Independency promiſed better Things and pleaded loudly and ſtrongly for Liberty of Conſcience and Univerſal Toleration; and yet when *Independents*, driven by the Rigours of Church Government out of *Old England*, got Footing and Power in *New England*, they forgot their Sufferings and their Principles, and there perſecuted the *Quakers*; but theſe laſt, tho' we have ſeen them with Government in their Hands, were never known to perſecute or moleſt any for Conſcience ſake. To the Honour of that People this is ſpoken. But to proceed.

Under this Species of malignant Enthuſiaſm ſtand likewiſe ranged all thoſe who have made themſelves infamous in the World by their impious Pretenſions to a Divinity of Character, equalling themſelves to one or other of the three Perſons in the ſacred Trinity; of which Sort were ſome of the Hereſiarchs of old; and among the more modern ones are to be reckoned *David George*, who gave out, that he was the ſpiritual Meſſiah in whom all the Prophecies centred, and other Blaſphe-

mies: As alſo that *Peruvian* Doctor, who affirmed that he was poſſeſſed of a Sanctity ſuperior to that of Angels, and that God Almighty had offered to make him Partaker of the Hypoſtatic Union, *&c.* To which may be added in a lower Degree the chief Leaders of a Fanatic Tribe in *Germany* in the Sixteenth Century, who boaſted that they were commiſſioned by God to reſtore the Kingdom of *Chriſt*, aſpired at Sovereignty, and attempted to depoſe Princes, declaring that they themſelves were the Meek who ſhould inherit the Earth: And with theſe may be joined the Fifth Monarchy Men of the laſt Age, and all ſuch filthy Dreamers as go about with carnal Weapons in their Hands to erect *Chriſt's* ſpiritual Kingdom on mundane Syſtems.

We ſee in theſe Inſtances how Zeal for Religion ſpringing up in Hearts unpurified by Chriſtian Faith and Humility, partakes of all the Foulneſs of the Soil that feeds it, mixes with the unſubdued Paſſions of the natural Man, and, where it meets with any uncommon degree of Pride, and affected Singularity, lays itſelf open to all the Deluſions of Satan, becomes impregnated with the Spirit of Error, and brings forth the

the poiſonous Fruits of a malignant Enthuſiaſm.

The ſecond Kind of Enthuſiaſm that falls under Conſideration is of a mixt Nature: I do not mean that it partakes in any Degree of the Malignancy of the foregoing Species, for the Soul in this Caſe is ſo far influenced by the Holy Spirit, that the Devil has not ſufficient hold of it to drive it into any criminal or ſinful Exceſſes, yet it is not without a greater or leſs Degree of Infirmity, Weakneſs, and Error. But before we proceed on this Head, it will be proper to give the original Senſe of the Word Enthuſiaſm, according to its true Etymology.

They who were ſuppoſed to be in this State were called by the Antients Ενθουσιαζαι, Ενθεοι, Θεοληπτοι, or *Numine afflati* — Men animated in an extraordinary Manner with the Spirit of God, or apprehended, ſeized, or inſpired of God. And this Meaning of the Word is allowed and uſed by Dr. *H. More*, in his *Treatiſe on Enthuſiaſm*, where he ſpeaks of *verum, pium, probatumque Enthuſiaſmum ſanctarum, ſinceraumque animarum*, or the pious, true and approved Enthuſiaſm of ſincere and holy Souls: doubtleſs

meaning among theſe ſuch as he deſcribes in *the Viſion of the Rider of the White Horſe*, Men rooted and grounded in the Love of God, and flaming with a Holy Zeal for *Chriſt*, and therefore fit Inſtruments to reform the World. I cannot help quoting the Paſſage (tho' with ſome little Abbreviation) as it ſeems to be delivered in the Ardour of a prophetic Spirit: " The ſharp-" edged Sword which is here ſaid to come " out of the Mouth of *Chriſt*, is in Effect " the very ſame that comes out of the " Mouths of his Saints, who rule the " World by convincing them of their " Wickedneſs and cauſing them to return to " God. This ſharp, piercing and vehe-" ment Reproof out of the Mouths of the " People of God againſt the Beaſt and " the falſe Prophet is here ſaid to be a " Sword coming out of the Mouth of *Chriſt*, " becauſe their Mouths are his Mouth, and " He inſpires them by his Spirit to tranſmit " that Blaſt of Fire and flaming Breath " (as it is called in *Eſdras)* whereby the " Wicked are conſumed. This Flame " and this Sword I take to be clear Truth " and ſound ſearching Reaſon inſpired from " the Eternal Word, which whetted with " a holy,

" a holy, ſincere, and unaffected kind of " Enthuſiaſtic Zeal, and backed with an " unexceptionable Life and Converſation, " will be like a ſharp-edged Sword with the " Weight of running Quick-ſilver in the " Back of it, whoſe Stroke will fall with " ſuch a Sway that it will even chine the " Enemy at one Blow, will divide aſunder " Soul and Spirit, and pierce through the " Joints and Marrow." Let thus much ſuffice to diſtinguiſh between true and falſe Enthuſiaſm, and to reſcue the Word from that popular Odium and Abuſe of Language with which the Pretence or Deluſion of ſome feigned or fanciful *Illuminati* have diſgraced it.

But however exalted the foregoing Character given by the Doctor may ſeem, and really is, yet inaſmuch as it generally comes under the Denomination of mixt Enthuſiaſm, it is not exempt from Infirmity and Error: But if we reſolve to admit of no Reformers but ſuch as are perfect Saints, and free from every Degree of Hallucination and Miſconduct, we are not likely to ſee any Amendment wrought in the World. That Difference which appears among the Fathers of the Church in their Judg-

ment concerning ſome Points of Religion; their Diſputes one againſt another *; their Retractations, and ſome other Particulars in their Lives and Conduct, if brought to the Teſt of a ſevere Examination, may all ſerve to exemplify the Truth of the Apoſtle's Words, that *every Prieſt taken from among Men is compaſſed about with Infirmity.* Yet what ſhall we ſay of a *Bayle* or a *Middleton*, who could overlook the eminent Gifts and Graces of theſe holy Men, to pick out their Blemiſhes of human Infirmity, in order to diſcredit their Teſtimony and all that was divine in their Characters. There is not perhaps any thing more oppoſite to the Genius of true *Chriſtianity* than that Cloſeneſs and Bigotry of Spirit which hinders us from ſeeing and loving the Beauty of Holineſs in the Character of any Perſon, only becauſe he thinks not or walks not with us; as if the all-bountiful God meaſured out his Grace and Goodneſs according to the ſcanty Pattern of the national, notional Orthodoxy of Men: And therefore what a little Heart muſt a late Writer have had when he went about to depreciate the exalted Virtues of the

* As betwixt *Chryſoſtom* and *Epiphanius*, *Jerom* and *Ruſinus*, *Cyril* and *Theodoret*, &c.

Marquis

Marquis *De Renti*, on account of his being of the Romiſh Communion! could he ſee nothing worthy of his own Imitation in that excellent Nobleman, that Mirrour of *Chriſtian* Piety? Could he fix his Eye upon nothing in ſo glorious a Character but his Reverence for a monitory Crucifix, that Exceſs of Honour he paid the Saints, and ſome other Particularities of his Church which we commend not? Let it be told him, what he might have ſeen, if his Eyes had not been blinded by Prejudice: He might have ſeen in him a young Gentleman of Quality and Fortune renouncing the Pomps and Vanities of the World for the Love of God: He might have ſeen in him an Inſtance of profound Humility in high Life walking in the Steps of his Bleſſed Maſter, and after his Example going about doing good both to the Bodies and Souls of Men: And he might have beheld in him the manifeſt Tokens of a devout Heart and heavenly Affections, and a moſt illuſtrious Exemplification of divine Faith, Hope, and Charity. All this he might have ſeen in the Marquis *De Renti*, if it had not better ſuited a mocking Humour to ridicule his Mortification and Self-denial together with ſome Mixture

of

of Weakneſs in a Life conſecrated to God. How much more ingenuous, of how catholick a Spirit was that honeſt Quaker who was ſo charmed with this Pattern of Chriſtian Excellency (tho' I believe as much averſe to Superſtition as this Author) that he thought an Epitome of ſuch a Character an Embelliſhment to his Book *. "He "was (ſays he) a Man of an enlightened "Mind; and of a Soul mortified to the "World, and quickened to ſome Taſte of "a ſupernatural Life: Let his Youth, let "his Quality adorned with ſo much Zeal "and Piety, ſo much Self-denial and Con-"ſtancy, become exemplary to thoſe of "worldly Quality who may be the Readers "of this Book." But it ſeems, *He had a ſtrong Tincture of the Enthuſiaſtic Spirit.* Let it be aſked, inſtead of a Reply; What Spirit he was tinctured with, and what Cauſe he meant to ſerve, when he took ſo much Pains to diſgrace the Character of the holy Marquis *De Renti?*

The Reader probably by this time begins to grow better reconciled to Enthuſiaſm in a proper Senſe of the Word, and to find that it is no ſuch terrible Bugbear

* *Penn's* No Croſs no Crown.

"as

as they might before imagine, nay, on the contrary, wears a beautiful Form! But let it be carried in Mind, that they in whom the Spirit of God ſo dwells are but Men, and that therefore, as they have this Treaſure in earthen Veſſels, their Strength will be joined to Weakneſs, like the Feet of *Nebuchadnezzar's* Image which were partly of Iron and partly of Clay; for few, very few there are, who have their Minds ſo thoroughly enlightened with Wiſdom from Above, and their Hearts ſo totally purified by Faith and Humility, as not to have remaining in them great Mixtures of Ignorance and Frailty: Hence ariſe frequent Miſtakes in very eminent *Chriſtians* with regard to their Spiritual Eſtate, great Unevenneſs and Inconſtancy: They find in themſelves at times a very ardent Love for God, and the Flame of their Devotion riſes high; and in ſuch Frames ſcarce any Figures are lofty enough to expreſs the Sublimity of their Raptures—We ſee them ſkipping like Roes upon the Mountains — riding on the Wings of the Wind, or ſoaring as an Eagle towards Heaven. Theſe may be called irregular Flaſhes of the celeſtial Fire, or tranſient Touches of the divine Spirit, which even penetrate the

the animal Nature and tranſport them beyond themſelves. Young Converts to the divine Life have generally the moſt ſenſible Experience of them, the Reaſons of which are aſſignable; but they are apt to place too much to their account, immoderately coveting them, and as much dejected upon their being withdrawn; hence frequent Complaints of Deſertions, Darkneſs, the Hidings of God's Face, *&c.* The like Viciſſitudes we meet with in *David*; ſometimes we ſee him ſet upon his high Places, and boaſting, that his Hill is made ſo ſtrong that he ſhall never be moved; and then preſently he is in Heavineſs — God has turned away his Face from him, and he is troubled.

The Soul is ſometimes in a more tender Frame, and feels itſelf as it were melted into divine Love, ſo that if the former may be compared to Fire, this State may be ſaid to reſemble Oil, which is a Figure (if it be only a Figure) often uſed in Scripture to denote inward Joy and Gladneſs, as well as the Graces of the Holy Spirit. When the Soul is thus affected, it is natural for it to adopt another kind of Language whoſe Style is pathetic and mellifluous — It walks in the Garden with its Beloved, whoſe

whoſe Lips like Lilies drop ſweet Myrrh — It leans upon his Boſom, and he ſpreads over it the Banner of his Love — All is ineffable Sweetneſs, and the Burden of the Song is — My Beloved is mine, and I am his. The Reader need not here be told that this is the Language of the *Song of Solomon*, which was doubtleſs the divine Breathings of a Spiritual Affection, and not, as ſome of an earthly Mind ſuppoſe, the amorous Expreſſions of a carnal Love. But theſe Guſts of Suavity and Delectation are not ordinarily of any long Continuance, being rather deſigned as refreſhing Cordials to ſuſtain the Spirit in this its State of Weakneſs, to allure it on its Way, and to diſgrace the low, groſs Satisfactions of Senſe, than appointed for its conſtant and daily Food, and therefore ought not to be paſſionately or impatiently coveted. We ſhould leave the diſpenſing of his Comforts to God alone, who knows beſt what we ſtand in need of, and remember that a Life of Faith, under the Denial of theſe Spiritual Delicacies, accords for the moſt Part, better with the Nature of a probationary State. It may not be amiſs to obſerve here by way of Caution, that to publiſh or promiſcuoſly declare

declare these our inward Experiences is not at all Times prudent: What passes in the Interior betwixt God and our Souls, is not always designed for the Benefit of others, but for our own private Instruction, Trial, or Improvement: Besides, as the Religion of the Many rises no higher than their Forms, it will be talking to them as in an unknown Tongue, whilst People of a cavilling and scoffing Spirit will not fail to treat the Relaters as mad-brained Enthusiasts: But this must be left to Christian Prudence, as there are confessedly Occasions where they may be of great Use to such as are fit to profit by them.

Another Error which People of good Dispositions under strong Religious Influences are subject to, is that of confounding the Motions of God's Holy Spirit with those of their own natural Wills and Propensions. It is said of *Socrates's* Genius or Dæmon, and that by himself, that it was dehortatory, not impulsive, restraining by inward Checks from acting upon particular Occasions, but not prompting him upon any: Tho' this is not true of that good Spirit under whose Influence all true *Christians* are, and from whom all our holy Desires

ſires and good Councils do proceed; yet as to the diſtinct Knowledge of its Operations, we are generally more ſenſible of its reſtraining than inciting Power over us: However that be, where the Impreſſions are not clear and convincing (as oftentimes they are not) they ſhould be attended to with a cool deliberate Judgment, and a Mind as free as poſſible from all partial Affections and every ſiniſter Bias, tried by the Rule of the written Word according to the Light given us, and offered up in Prayer for clearer Direction, and then if the Inſtigation continues, and does not croſs any plain Duty, we are warranted in acting purſuant thereto, tho' it be contrary to the common Sentiments and Ways of others, for the *Chriſtian* is not to be judged by the Opinions and Rules of common Men; but if he doubt, let him not act, for whatever is not of Faith is Sin: However, in this Caſe, it is both ſafer and better to call his Motive by the Name of Impreſſion or Perſuaſion than an Impulſe of the Spirit, ſince by the laſt we generally mean ſome extraordinary Vouchſafement of Light, or holy Violence upon the Will, and that upon uncommon Occaſions: For want of diſtinguiſhing with a cool diſpaſſio-

nate Judgment in Caſes of this Nature, the Ebulliency of natural Fervors and a premature Zeal will be apt to paſs eaſily upon the Mind for divine Impulſes, and our own haſty Reſolves for the Dictates of God's Spirit.

A third Error which has ſometimes miſled very ſerious and pious People, is that of the Imagination drawing Pictures of ſo lively a Reſemblance as to impreſs them with a ſtrong Belief of their Reality: And to theſe Illuſions penſive and ſolitary People are the more ſubject, on account of their greater Abſtraction of Thought, for as the imaginative Faculty has a kind of creative Power, ſo it gains Strength by the habitual Exerciſe of it. The Lives of the Romiſh Saints are full of Relations of this ſort, and as the People of that Communion generally exceed on the ſide of Credulity as much as ſome of their Neighbours on the contrary Extreme, ſo this their Fondneſs for the Marvellous has proved a great Temptation to the Writers of thoſe Lives to make great Additions to the Truth. But becauſe many of theſe Appearances have been merely illuſory, or Creatures of the Imagination, we are not upon that account to diſbelieve ſuch as come properly

properly atteſted by Perſons of Credit, ſeeing every Deceit as a Counterfeit implies a poſſible Reality: Beſides, an abſolute total Incredulity in this reſpect can only be ſupported by a degree of Credulity in another way that is more than ſufficient to believe the Point in Queſtion; for it muſt proceed upon a Belief that there can be no Communication between us and the World of Spirits, or that all ſuch Communication is ceaſed, which admits of no Shadow of Proof; as alſo that ſome of the beſt People in all Ages have born their Teſtimony to an Untruth in what they have related concerning ſuch Appearances as from their own Knowledge. That Inſtance of this kind given us by Dr. *Doddridge* in the Life of Colonel *Gardiner*, may, I think, be ſafely admitted; and, were it not that I well know with what Prejudice Narratives of this ſort are generally received, I could add others of equal Authority. If it be replied, that theſe, according to my own Suppoſition, might only be Repreſentations preſented to the Mind by the Imagination — It is readily allowed: But yet to affirm that there can be no poſſible Way for the Party immediately concerned to diſtinguiſh betwixt Fan-

cy and Reality, in these things, is to affirm, that St. *Paul* could have no Certainty in Relation to the Vision of the *Macedonian*, nor in that of the Angel in his Voyage to *Rome*, and yet we do not find that he was in any Doubt as to either, nay Doubt here would necessarily have defeated the End for which they were sent, the one being appointed for his Direction, the other for his Consolation. But I think it will scarcely be doubted, for sure it ought not, whether God can give us so lively and vigorous a Perception of such Representations as to stamp upon them all the Clearness of Certainty: Nor is it material whether the Imagination be the Seat of them or not, as He can convey unquestionable Notices to us by this as well as any other Faculty of the Mind; and to deny this Power to his good Spirit whilst we allow that evil Spirits can practise upon the Imaginations of Men with delusive Images, is placing the greater Power in the wrong Scale. As to the Credibility of these Appearances with respect to others, that will depend much upon the good Estimation in which the Relator stands with us for Veracity and Soundness of Mind, for, as these things are mostly for private

private Uſe, they ſeldom carry with them any further Credentials, unleſs ſome remarkable Effect follows which is ſo connected with them as to add a corroborating Evidence, and ſuch perhaps may be reckoned the ſudden Reformation of Colonel *Gardiner*.

Upon the whole; as the Imagination in this our fallen State is much diſordered, like the other Faculties of our Minds, through that Darkneſs and Deceivableneſs which Sin hath occaſioned, therefore, as in the Matter of Impulſes before, ſo here, great Care and Caution ſhould be uſed, that we ſuffer not the Workings of our corrupt Nature to impoſe upon us, nor give Acceſs through them to the Spirit of Error and Deluſion to deceive us into a falſe Enthuſiaſm: And in order to this it will be needful to live in a daily Mortification of the ſenſual Appetites and Paſſions, which have a very powerful Influence over the Imagination; not to indulge any fond Deſire after Viſions and Voices, but to cheriſh an humble Frame of Mind, that no Inflations of Spiritual Pride may diſpoſe us to believe a Lye: and to be much in Prayer to God to deliver us from the Temptations and Delu-

ſions of *Satan*, and all Deceits of our own treacherous Hearts, ſo apt to betray us into the Enemies Hands; and that He will give us a right Judgment in all things, that we may be able to diſcern betwixt Truth and Error. Such a Diſcipline will be a Means to preſerve our Minds from the Impoſture of falſe Pictures and Images, and enable us to make a right Uſe of God's Dealings with us both in the Diſpenſations of his Providence and his Grace.

There was the more need to be particular on this Head, as well to guard on the one hand againſt an Error which ſome well-meaning and pious People have been miſled by, as againſt that prevailing Incredulity on the other which treats all Appearances of a ſupernatural kind as Fictions or Diſtemper of Mind, which is too much the faſhionable *Hobbiſm* of this Age, and has a direct Tendency to Atheiſm: And indeed a ſtrong Tincture of the latter is much to be ſuſpected where Men openly profeſs themſelves ſo far *Saducees* as to diſbelieve all Manifeſtations of Angels or Spirits upon any Teſtimony whatever. Such Perſons generally make the higheſt Pretenſions to the Name of rational, tho' in this Inſtance they

they give no Proof of their being ſo, ſeeing that Reaſon is not more concerned in denying than affirming the real Exiſtence of theſe Things, it being rather the Office of Reaſon to ſeek for Truth here, as in moſt other Caſes, in the Mid-way betwixt believing too much and too little: And as to any Difficulty of diſtinguiſhing betwixt true and falſe in this Matter, the Objection concludes no more ſtrongly here than it does againſt truſting to the Report of our Senſes, to the Profeſſions of Friendſhip, or to many other Matters that occur in common Life, on account of the various Deceits and Impoſitions that we are daily liable to.

It may not be unſeaſonable in this Place to add a general Caution againſt treating with Ridicule or Levity what ſerious and religious People declare concerning their Experiences, tho' they may not be altogether free from Indiſcretion or Miſtake therein. Whatever paſſes betwixt God and the Soul, tho' according to our moſt imperfect Apprehenſions of it, is a Subject of ſerious Conſideration, and the very weakeſt of our Brethren, if well-meaning, are in this Caſe among thoſe little ones whom we ſhould not dare to offend. Theſe things have been

treated of late in a very unbecoming Manner, and it is high time to take Notice of it, and to reſcue the Myſteries of the divine Life from the Mockery of profane Jeſters. *Chriſtianity* is too much conſidered by many as a Science only, but they who denied it to be experimental alſo know nothing of it yet as they ought to know, nor are qualified to ſpeak with Propriety on any one Grace of the Goſpel. The Soul has its Senſations as well as the Body, its Affections and Paſſions are confeſſedly ſuch, nor is it eaſy to conceive how we can be made Partakers of thoſe Fruits of the Spirit, Love, Joy, Peace, but by our ſpiritual Senſes put into Exerciſe by a Principle of ſpiritual Life, unleſs it may alſo be affirmed that we have no other way whereby to judge of our bodily Health and Soundneſs than by diſtinct Acts of Perception or Reflexion. What a ſtrange kind of Divinity then muſt that be which would rob Faith of its ſubſtantial Comforts, and explain away the high Privileges of the *Chriſtian* into ideal Nothings, whilſt it allows to the animal Man a ſenſible Experience of his vain Loves and earthly Satisfactions!

Let

Let thus much ſuffice under the Article of mixt Enthuſiaſm conſidered as that State of the divine Life in which there is much of Infirmity and Miſtake, and oftentimes of Deception and Error ariſing from Complexion, Prejudice of Education, Paſſions not thoroughly mortified, or wrong Habits not ſufficiently ſubdued; but notwithſtanding this Mixture of Darkneſs and natural Corruption with the Light and Grace of God's good Spirit, ſtill Holineſs is the prevailing Principle, and divine Love keeps the Aſcendant in the Soul, as a Flame never extinguiſhed, tho' varying in Steddineſs and Luſtre from different Cauſes. We are furniſhed with many eminent Inſtances of Perſons in this Character in every Church, all holy People, (whatever outward Communion of *Chriſtians* they belong to) being fellow Members of that Catholic Church for which we pray, and joint Aſſociates in that bleſſed Communion of Saints of which *Chriſt Jeſus*, God bleſſed for ever, is the only ſupreme Head.

It remains that ſomething be ſaid of pure Enthuſiaſm (according to the proper Definition of the Word) as ſignifying that high State of Chriſtian Perfection in which Men

Men of purified Souls hold intimate Communion with God through the Fellowſhip of his Holy Spirit, having their Minds defecated from all heterogeneous Mixtures, irradiated with his divine Light, and taſting the ineffable Sweetneſs of that Love, Joy, and Peace, which conſtitute a ſelf-evident and glorious Diſplay of the Kingdom of God within us. He that is come up hither may well be compared to *Jacob's* Ladder; tho' he ſtandeth upon the Earth, yet he reacheth unto the higheſt Heavens: He is in Poſſeſſion of every thing that is Great and Excellent, for he is united to God; he hath attained to the End of all Ordinances, for Love fulfilleth all things in him, and *Chriſt* giveth him to eat of ſpiritual Meat, and to drink of the Water of Life freely: He needeth not that one teach him, for he is taught of God, and that Wiſdom which is a Breath of his Power maketh her Abode with him, and feedeth him with the Bread of Underſtanding: he is got above the Reach of Deluſions ariſing from the Phantaſms of an irregular Imagination, being reduced to an entire Poverty of Spirit, denuded of all Self-hood, and mortified to natural Senſibilities, ſo that his Illuminations

are

are clear as the Rivers of Paradiſe, and the divine Communications to his Soul pure as the ſhining Light. But how ſhall he particularize this State who hath attained to no Experience of it? ſeeing thoſe few who have, declare it to ſurpaſs Deſcription: the great Dr. *More* before quoted (who in one Part of his Life ſeems to have been of this Number) calls it "a moſt joyous and lucid "State of Mind, and ſuch as is ineffable;" and in ſome Places, "a Union with the "divine Celeſtial Principle:" "I am (ſpeaking of himſelf in this State of glorious Liberty) *Incola Cœli*, an Inhabitant of "Heaven; He that is come hither, God "hath taken him to be his own familiar "Friend, and tho' He ſpeaks to others "aloof off in outward Religions and Pa-"rables, yet He leads this Man by the Hand, "ſpeaks to him plainly in his own Lan-"guage, ſweetly inſinuates himſelf into and "poſſeſſes all his Faculties, Underſtanding, "Reaſon, and Memory: This is the Dar-"ling of God, and a Prince amongſt Men, "far above the Diſpenſation of either Mi-"racle or Prophecy*."

The Doctor was well aware that the

* Life of Dr. *Hen. More* by *Ward*.

Relation

Relation of ſuch high Experiences would meet with but a very indifferent Reception from thoſe cold ſtiff Religioniſts, whoſe icy Hearts were unthawed by the Fervors of divine Love, and never taſted the Sweetneſs of an elevated Piety, and therefore in his Myſtery of Godlineſs, Book VIII. Ch. xiv. intituled, *A Vindication of the true Members of Chriſt from Phariſaical Aſperſions*, he obviates their Charge of Madneſs and Phrenzy upon the Children of God. The whole Chapter is ſo pat to the Purpoſe, that I had much ado to forbear tranſcribing the Whole; but I content myſelf with giving the Reader an Abſtract of the xi^th Section. " It muſt needs be that thoſe who " ſpeak with much Zeal and Vigour things " true in themſelves, yet to others unintelli- " gible, muſt be by them reputed no better " than Madmen: And hence it was that " *Feſtus* told *Paul* that much Learning had " made him mad. Here probably may be " the Ground of that ordinary Saying — " *Nullum magnum Ingenium ſine admixturâ* " *Dementiæ*; and according to Analogy it " may well be ſaid that *Nullus inſignis Chriſ-* " *tianus, &c.* that there is no eminent " *Chriſtian* that will not ſeem to have ſome

" Spice

" Spice of Madneſs in him, eſpecially if he
" be judged by the formal ſtiff *Phariſee*,
" whoſe Poſtures and Actions are always
" kept, as it were, in an outward wooden
" Frame, as a Child in a ſtanding ſtool;
" his Traditions and cuſtomary Opinions
" being as deeply ſcored and carved in his
" Memory as the outward Shows of Things
" are ſcrawled out in the rude Furrows of an
" Idiot's Brain: and as the unſkilful Ruſ-
" tic would ſuſpect him ſcarce ſound in his
" Senſes that ſhould confidently ſpeak any
" thing that palpably croſſed thoſe groſs
" Scrawlings written in his Imagination:
" So certainly would the formal *Phariſee*
" not ſtick to judge him mad that ſhould
" with Zeal and Boldneſs pronounce ſuch
" things as were not parallel nor agreeable
" to the Prefigurations of his prejudiced
" Mind, but moſt of all, if they were
" ſuch as are above the Reach of his Appre-
" henſion: Surely the more earneſt a true
" Member of *Chriſt* ſhould be in ſuch
" Points, the more mad he would appear
" in the Eyes of the cool, prudential *Pha-*
" *riſee*."

It is obſerved with regard to this Diſpenſation by thoſe who have been raiſed to it, that

that it is seldom of any long Duration, being rather a short Earnest or Prelibation of the Beatific State afforded to pure and holy Souls, than any permanent Dispensation; and it is generally, if not always, followed by some humbling Trial; accordingly we read in the Case of St. *Paul's* being caught up to the third Heaven, that immediately after this Rapt or Vision there was given him *a Thorn in the Flesh, the Messenger of Satan to buffet him, lest he should be exalted above Measure*; by which we cannot understand less than that he was exercised with some sharp bodily Affliction for his Humiliation: And this may help to explain what frequently happens to those who belong to an inferior State, according to their more remote or nearer Approaches to this respectively, who find their joyous and delectable Intervals succeeded by Fits of Heaviness and gloomy Overcasts, whence their Complaints of Aridities, Desertions, *&c.* which People of a moderate Experience in the divine Life cannot be unacquainted with, tho' many, for want of Light into the Methods and Reasons of God's Dealings with Souls, are apt to be troubled above Measure upon these Occasions, as tho' some strange thing had

had happened unto them, not knowing, or not conſidering, that the ſame Afflictions are accompliſhed in their Brethren, and that they are ſent, after they have ſuffered a while, to perfect, ſtabliſh, ſtrengthen, ſettle them.

It will be proper to obſerve here, that the Way to any good Degree of Perfection in the divine Life lies through great Mortification and Self-denial: Some think it enough to get Doctrines into the Head, but till the Heart is in ſome Meaſure purified by Faith nothing is rightly done: And in order to this the Children of *Anak*, thoſe corrupt Paſſions and Inclinations that war againſt the Soul, muſt be driven out, the Perverſeneſs of the Will broken, the Underſtanding ſimplified, the Pride of our Hearts pluckt up by the Roots, and all the Cords that bind us to the World and the Things of it untwiſted; in a word, our Idols muſt be caſt out, and every curſed thing removed that ſeparates betwixt God and us, for the pure in Heart and they only ſhall ſee God: It was by this kind of holy Violence practiſed on themſelves that the Worthies both of the Old and New Teſtament, in all Ages of the Church, have laid

laid hold on the Kingdom of Heaven, been favoured with such rich Communications from God, and enabled to work such Wonders as surpass the Belief of many in this degenerate incredulous Age: And that a preparatory Discipline of Strictness and Severity is necessary in order to qualify us for any extraordinary Vouchsafements of Illumination and Grace, we may learn from the Schools instituted among the *Jews* for the training up of Persons for the Prophetic Office, where they were educated in great Abstraction from the World, in the Government of their Passions and the Mortification of their natural Propensions, that being so disengaged from the common Impediments of a holy Life, they might be more at Liberty for Devotion and the Contemplation of heavenly things, and by such previous Exercises become fit Instruments for the Holy Spirit and more receptive of heavenly Wisdom. Thus came they out holy Enthusiasts, Men of God furnished to every good Word and Work, Scribes well instructed unto the Kingdom of Heaven, and fearless of giving Offence in the Way of Duty, even before Kings, being no less qualified for Reproof and Correction than

for Doctrine and Inſtruction in Righteouſneſs, Patterns theſe for all Perſons of a Religious Character, whether they live in Colleges or are in Kings Houſes; whether they attend on thoſe who go clothed in Purple and fine Linen and fare ſumptuouſly every Day, or are called forth to a more promiſcuous Employment of their Office: for tho' the Diſpenſation of Prophecy as it reſpects the foretelling future Events, has of a long Time ceaſed in the Church, yet the Character of Prophets in the Capacity of Expounders and Declarers of God's Word and Will, and as Denouncers of his Judgments on all impenitent, even the moſt dignified, Offenders, is never to ceaſe in it, neither is the Lord's Hand ſhortened that it cannot extend Comfort and Courage, Light and Direction for theſe Purpoſes now as formerly: But alas! our Hearts are ſtraitned that they cannot receive it as they ought, and we are ſo entangled, as to many of us, with ſuch an evil Covetouſneſs after the Things of of this Life, ſo ſtudious to ſeek the Honour that cometh of Man more than the Honour that cometh of God, that we want Boldneſs to hold the Faith of our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt* without Reſpect of Perſons: For let Men

be never ſo highly titled or characterized, let their Pretenſions to Learning be what they will, and their Acquaintance with Creeds, Canons and Commentators never ſo extenſive, yet ſo long as they continue Men of this World, and follow the Things of it, ſo long as their Affections are ſet on Things beneath, and their Hearts unſurrendered to God, they are no better than dry Bones as to the divine Life, without Marrow or Moiſture; and as they cannot in ſuch a State receive the Things of the Spirit of God, not having ſpiritual Senſes exerciſed thereto, ſo will theſe things of courſe appear Fooliſhneſs unto them in others, and they will ſpeak Evil of that which they know not.

I am here led to ſay a word concerning Inſpiration, and to obſerve that this beſt of God's Gifts to Men (however the Belief of this may be deemed Enthuſiaſm by ſome) is the certain Privilege, in one degree or other, of every true Chriſtian; for a Goſpel Faith is nothing leſs than a ſupernatural Light and Power communicated to the Soul from the Father of Lights; and every ſaving Grace in us is, in its meaſure, a real Participation of the Divine Nature. The prevailing Prejudice

judice againſt the Doctrine of Inſpiration thus held ariſes in part from a groſs Miſconception concerning ſome ſuppoſed phyſical Diſtance between God and the Soul, whereas nothing is nearer to God than the Soul of Man in the original Conſtitution of its Nature, nor is it now ſeparated from Him by Diſtance of Place, but only by the Condition of its Exiſtence in Sin. In proportion then as it is purified by Faith from Sin, and gives itſelf up in Obedience to the Drawings of the Father thro' his Spirit, ſo far it advances in its Union and Communion with God, and comes into Fellowſhip with the Father and the Son: So that the Light of Divine Truth ſhining in our Hearts, and all holy Tempers and Diſpoſitions of Soul are by the Inſpiration of God, and real Emanations from the Fountain of Light and Love. For this Inſpiration we are taught to pray in the Service of the Church, but few ſeem to mean any thing by the Word, and the Learned by their falſe Gloſſes and Interpretations of the Scriptures on the one hand, and by exalting the Sufficiency of human Reaſon on the other, have ſo explained away this important Doctrine of all Religion both natural and revealed that we no longer wonder

that the Belief of all internal Operations of God in the Soul is treated as Enthuſiaſm or Fanaticiſm. It is by theſe ſuperficial Dealers in the Letter that we have ſeen the Life of the Letter taken away, the beggarly Elements of human Ideas ſet up in the Room of the Light of God in the Soul, and the Scriptures diſgraced by opprobrious Compariſons drawn between them and Heatheniſh Compoſitions, as if one main Excellency of the Sacred Writings conſiſted in outdoing *Homer* in Imagery, or *Demoſthenes* in Oratory: But ſuch degrading Encomiaſts would do well to remember that He whoſe Character is that of being the Wiſdom of God, and who in the Days of his fleſhly Appearance ſpake as never Man ſpake, made no account of human Eloquence; and that the Authority with which he ſpake conſiſted not in the Sublimity of Figures, or the Elegance of Diction, but in Demonſtration of the Spirit and Power from on High.

A diſtinct Conſideration of the Nature of Enthuſiaſm is at this Time the more requiſite, inaſmuch as the anonymous Author before referred to, in his Work on this Subject, has not diſtinguiſhed the different Kinds of it, but confounded Truth and Error,

ror, Light and Darkneſs in one promiſcuous Huddle, that he might with a fuller Hand fling the Dirt of his Reproach upon experimental Religion, at the ſame time ridiculing the Infirmities and aggravating the Blemiſhes of many pious *Chriſtians* of different Communions, both among the Living and the Dead, in order to form diſtorted Compariſons for the Sport of Buffoons and Infidels. To inſtance in what he ſays of thoſe two different States of Mind which Chriſtian People, who attend to what paſſes within them, make frequent Mention of, *viz.* as being at certain Times exerciſed with Doubts and Fears about the Condition of their Souls, and under a total Abſence of ſpiritual Comfort, at others, highly tranſported with grateful Reſentments of the divine Love and Favour, and filled with great Joy and Peace in believing. Now he can ſee nothing more in theſe than the common Effects reſulting from the Mechaniſm of the animal Oeconomy: "The Force "of Diſtemper and bodily Diſorder, ſays "he, will account for ſuch dark and diſcon-"ſolate Thoughts" (in the former Caſe;) and as to the latter, he reſolves it into Enthuſiaſm, "a kind of Drunkenneſs (theſe are his

Words) " filling and intoxicating the Brain " with the heated Fumes of ſpirituous Par- " ticles." And in order to compleat his Parallel betwixt thoſe two States of the Mind and a common Debauch, he adds: " No ſooner do the Inebriation and Inca- " leſcence go off, but a ſinking of the Spi- " rits, a Coldneſs and Dullneſs take place, " and the lower is the Depreſſion in Propor- " tion to the preceding Elevation!"

How ſhall we anſwer ſuch Treatment of ſpiritual Things without Rebuke! What ſhall we ſay, when one who owns himſelf a Miniſter, is not aſhamed to reflect ſo diſgracefully on religious Matters! Let us ſuppoſe then (if ſuch be his Character) that one under his Charge ſhould apply to him for Direction and Comfort under great Diſtreſs of Mind, complaining of uncommon Abatements of the Love of God in his Soul, and of great Deadneſs in Prayer; that he took no Satisfaction in the Way of Ordinances and Duties as uſual, but on the contrary found in himſelf a Backwardneſs to all religious Exerciſes, and a total Inſenſibility of Comfort from them. Would he tell ſuch a one that he ought to make no account of theſe things; that it was all owing to

the

the ſinking of the animal Spirits, and that he might find his Relief from riding out or cheerful Company, only taking in the Paroxyſm of the Fit, (as he is pleaſed to expreſs it) *q. ſ.* of Spirit of Harts-horn? Suppoſe again, that ſome ſuch diſconſolate Perſon were ſo happy as to receive Benefit from ſome of his Diſcourſes, (if we may ſuppoſe him to have any ſuitable to ſuch a Caſe) and ſhould come to thank him as the Inſtrument of his Conſolation, telling him withal, that the Cloud which before intercepted his Light and Comfort was removed, and that he no longer doubted his State of Acceptance, being ſtrong in Faith and Hope, and his Soul invigorated with a refreſhing Senſe of the divine Love and Goodneſs. Now what would be his Reply upon this Occaſion? Nay what other Reply can we ſuppoſe him to make, upon his own Principles, than as follows? "Neighbour, do not deceive yourſelf, by laying "any Streſs upon this Change of Mind that "you talk of, for between you and me (if "I may deal plainly with you) it is nothing "but a Fit of Enthuſiaſm, a kind of "Drunkenneſs, filling and intoxicating "your Brain with the heated Fumes of

" ſpirituous Particles, and when the Ine-
" briation and Incaleſcence are gone off,
" the following Depreſſion will be in Pro-
" portion to your preſent Elevation."

Thus the Affections and States of the Soul, with regard to its ſpiritual Concerns, are reſolved by him into the Effects of Matter and Motion, and one great Part of *Chriſtianity* ſubjected to the Laws of a mechanic Philoſophy, and therefore no wonder that he treats the Belief of all ſupernatural Influences upon Man, whether Divine or Diabolical, with ſuch an Air of Ridicule, as particularly where he banters the Belief of being poſſeſſed by evil Spirits, recommending a Doſe of Phyſic to the Patient as the beſt Dæmonifuge. The Fathers of the Church held theſe Caſes in more awful Conſideration: They appealed to the Roman Court for the Truth of the Matter *, and challenged a Trial of their Power to caſt evil Spirits out of the Poſſeſſed, not by Manna or Senna, but by the all powerful Name of *Chriſt:* And ſhould this Author be ever ſo unhappy as to be troubled with ſo foul a Gueſt, he will know of a Truth, that his cleanſing muſt be effected by a

* See *Tertullian*, *Lactantius*, and other Apologiſts.

very

very different kind of Cathartic from that which he ſo ludicrouſly preſcribes.

But he has found out the Secret whereby to account, as from a Principle, for all theſe Enthuſiaſtic Irregularities and Variations in the Temper, and that is, from a complexional Melancholy; and he refers the Reader to Dr. *Henry More's* Treatiſe on Enthuſiaſm. Now the Doctor in that Work profeſſedly treats of the falſe Enthuſiaſm, or that ranked here under the Diſtinction of Malignant, and diſtinguiſhes in the very ſame Work betwixt that Species of it, and what he there calls the approved and pious Enthuſiaſm of holy Souls, as obſerved before *. He allows a complexional Melancholy at the Bottom of both, fruitful of much Evil in the former, as of much Good in the latter Caſe, nay he paſſes a great Encomium on this particular Temperament, as being greatly helpful to "rouſe the Soul from its "ſpiritual Lethargy, to put it upon ſuſpect-"ing its State of falſe Peace, to ſtir it up "to Self-examination and Circumſpection, "to guard againſt Levity and *fooliſh Jeſting*, "and to prepare faithful and obedient Souls

* See Sect. lxiv. as alſo his large Note on that Section in *Scholia* at the End of the Diſſertation. *Latin* Edition.

"for

" for the Work of true Regeneration and " the Influxes of the Holy Spirit." It is very plain, from the Quotations before given from the Doctor, that he was no Enemy to Enthuſiaſm, properly ſo called, nay, he freely confeſſes, that he had a Tincture of it himſelf: his Works ſhew it; and it was this divine Fire that gave Wings to his Soul, and Sublimity to his Sentiments, carrying him at times far above thoſe little Exactneſſes and Rules of Language, which ſuit much better thoſe minute Critics who ſit trimming their Phraſes and turning their Periods, than Perſons of his Elevation and Genius: And yet when we ſay, that this great Man at times fell ſhort of himſelf, and that the Freedom of his Spirit in ſome Inſtances was contracted into ſomething of a narrow Partiality, we only ſay, that he was a Man. I here take my Leave of this Author at preſent with referring the Reader to the lxiii[d] and lxiv[th] Sections of his *Scholia in Enthuſiaſmum Triumphatum*, for the Commendations which he there gives to a true Enthuſiaſm, and for the Uſefulneſs which he aſcribes to a right Melancholy in the divine Life.

Melancholy is generally conſidered as a Diſtemper of the Mind, whereas it only

becomes ſuch through an Exceſs of it in the animal Oeconomy, it being one of thoſe four Complexions which diſtinguiſh the human Conſtitution. The animal Body of Man is compounded of the four Elements, anſwering to the four Complexions, and the animal Spirit may be called a Quinteſſence or fifth Eſſence. Now according as one or other of theſe four Elements predominates in Man, ſo is he denominated Choleric, Melancholy, Phlegmatic, or Sanguine; and from the particular Craſis or Mixture of theſe Ingredient Principles ariſes his natural Diſpoſition, Genius, *&c.* Thus he that has moſt of Fire in his Compoſition, which is the choleric Complexion, is more prone to Anger and Pride than others, impatient of Contradiction, *&c.* and if miſtaken Apprehenſions concerning Religion mix with this Temperament it is apt to flame out in a furious perſecuting Zeal, for, if it be not well qualified with the Water of Life, the Devil has great Power over it, and it is eaſily ſet on Fire of Hell, as the Words and Actions of People under the Dominion of paſſionate Anger too fully demonſtrate. The phlegmatic Complexion is more inert and leſs ſuſceptible of Impreſſions — The Melancholy

lancholy is fixt, retentive, and circumſpect — The Sanguin, active and cheerful, but inconſtant. Hence proceed the different Tempers obſervable in Men, as alſo what we commonly call conſtitutional Virtues and Vices, (the Sin that ſo eaſily beſets us) and where the Power of the Complexion is naturally ſtrong, it ſtamps its Signatures oftentimes in the Lines and Configuration of the Features, ſo as to make them an Index to the Complexion, and herein is the true Ground of the Art of Phyſiognomy. Now Religion, tho' it lies deeper than the Complexion, even in the Soul or immortal Spirit (which communicates with the ſpiritual World from whence it has its Birth) yet its Operations are tinctured by the Complexion as Light is tinged by the Colour of the Glaſs that tranſmits it: And this will account for that Variety of Appearances and Diſpoſitions in which Religion manifeſts itſelf in the beſt of Men under a great Diverſity of Talents, Inclinations, and Tempers, as in the active and retired *Chriſtian*, the meek and the courageous, the reſerved and the communicative; for the religious Principle doth not ſo much alter and change the Complexion, (tho' it goes a great way towards

wards it in ſome, by giving to it Conſiſtency and Fixedneſs) as it qualifies, corrects, and purifies it; and perhaps this is what we are to underſtand by the Sanctification of our Bodies, not of the groſs corruptible Fleſh, but of the Complexion.

It is eaſy to believe, by what is ſaid of *Paul's* breathing out Threatnings and Slaughter againſt the Diſciples of the Lord, and of his being exceedingly mad againſt them in perſecuting them from City to City, that he was by Nature choleric; nor are we to ſuppoſe that his Converſion wrought a total Change in his Complexion, but ſanctified it: His Zeal was ardent both before and after, but here lay the Difference: In the one Inſtance it was a natural Fire or blind Impetus, in the latter a holy Zeal for God and Souls, under the Direction and Influence of divine Light and Love: St. *John* perhaps had all his Light and more than all his Love, but not ſo high a degree of fervent Zeal. Now what ſhould we ſay of any one that ſhould go about to explain the holy Zeal and Love of theſe great Apoſtles from a natural Elevation of the animal Spirits, or the heated Fumes of rarified Particles? We could not, I think,

ſay

ſay leſs, than that ſuch chemical Reaſoning ill accounts for Chriſtian Graces. Had the Author who ſays ſuch Things been a myſtic Writer, and ſpoken of ſpiritual Inebriation, after the Manner of thoſe Authors we could well have borne with him, but it plainly appears that he had no Notion of that, any otherwiſe then as a fit Subject of Banter, and therefore could only ſpeak of it in Deriſion. Let us hear the divine *Macarius* deſcribing the Elevations and Depreſſions of ſpiritual Perſons in a way becoming ſo ſerious a Subject, and like a Man thoroughly experienced in heavenly Myſteries, in the following Extract from his xviii^th^ Homily, where he aſcribes them to the Operations of the Spirit of God in holy Souls. "At certain Times they are "elated as at a Royal Banquet, and re- "joice with Gladneſs and Joy unſpeakable: "at others, as the Angels, light and agil, "and as it were free from all Incumbrance "of theſe material Vehicles: and at other "Times, like Men overcome with Drink, "exhilarated and even intoxicated with the "Spirit. At other Seaſons they are ſunk "into Grief and Lamentation for all Man- "kind, interceding for the whole Stock of "*Adam*,

" *Adam*, and taking up a wailing and weep-
" ing for it: Then again ſo inflamed with
" the Joy and Love of the Spirit, that, if
" it were poſſible, they would ſnatch up
" every Man into their Boſom. Some-
" times they are humbled ſo far below every
" other Perſon in Self-abaſement, that they
" think themſelves inferior to and leſs than
" all: At others, they reſemble a ſtrong
" Man, who comes forth in Royal Armour
" to the Battle, and valiantly overcomes his
" Enemies, *&c.* So very various is the Way
" of the Spirit in conducting the Soul
" to God, ſometimes refreſhing her, and
" ſometimes trying and exerciſing her, that
" ſo ſhe may be preſented pure and perfect
" to our heavenly Father."

In a word — To go about to explain and account for ſpiritual Effects from the ſole Agency of material and mechanical Cauſes, and thereby to exclude the divine Spirit from the Work of Religion in Man, argues great Ignorance in the true Nature of things, nay it is more than *Carteſian* Infidelity, and borders upon Atheiſm. If therefore we would ſpeak philoſophically upon Religious Subjects, we muſt know ſomething of the ſpiritual World, that ſo we may be able

able in part to conceive how the Good or the Evil Spirit in Conjunction with the Soul acts in and through Man's Animal Nature, according to the Laws of his material Syſtem: And this Knowledge, as far as it goes, will help to explain the Connexion of the Soul with the Body through the Mediation of the Animal Spirit, and alſo account for a great Variety of Matters in experimental Divinity: But this muſt be from the ſame Light which gives us the ſpiritual Knowledge of the Scriptures, and even in the moſt illuminated will be knowing but in Part, and ſeeing as through a Glaſs darkly in this State of great Imperfection; however, it may well be called Day-light if compared to the Darkneſs of the natural unenlightened Man, who, as ſuch, cannot know the Things of the Spirit of God, but will account them Fooliſhneſs. Thro' want of ſome degree of Knowledge as to the Communication betwixt ſpiritual and material Nature it is, that our Syſtems of Philoſophy in general are ſo very defective, and rather leaning to Infidelity; and hence probably may have proceeded that well known Reproach caſt upon Phyſicians, for that being led by the Study of their Profeſſion into

to

to a more intimate Acquaintance with the phyſical Cauſes and Operations of the Animal Oeconomy, many of them, either through want of Faith, or want of Knowledge in ſpiritual Nature, have miſtaken ſecond Cauſes for the firſt, and ſo by reſting there, have ſtopt ſhort of God. Sure it is, that true Divinity and true Philoſophy are never at variance, but on the contrary, when rightly underſtood, are mutually helpful to each other: And yet after all we muſt allow, that the neareſt way to God is by Faith, Hope, and Charity, and that theſe far ſurpaſs, and will do more for us, than the Knowledge of the higheſt Myſteries. But to return to the ſubject of Melancholy.

This of all the Complexions is beſt fitted for receiving and retaining religious Impreſſions, as being the moſt ſtable and ſerious, and, if properly qualified with the Sanguine, is perhaps the moſt perfect and amiable of the four: Yet this, like the others, has its Dangers and Temptations, for by Reaſon of original natural Corruption the evil Spirit has Acceſs to the Soul through this likewiſe, none but the Lord of Life having ever been able to ſay — "He hath no Part

"in me." That Melancholy will operate very powerfully in Perſons of this Complexion in the Religious as well as any other Character, ſometimes driving them to Deſpair, and in ſome Inſtances ending in Madneſs, ſtands confeſſed: Hence the Undiſcerning are apt to aſcribe it to Exceſs in Religion, or to what Dr. *Trapp* calls *being Righteous overmuch*, whereas the true Cauſe is ſome radical Evil, or vicious Exceſs in the Complexion, and therefore Madneſs in this Caſe is to be accounted for in the ſame way that we account for Phrenzy, Lunacy, or Idiocy in any other of the four Temperaments: and we may with as good Reaſon blame the Sun for producing noxious Weeds and poiſonous Plants, as attribute theſe Effects to Religion, which is well calculated to correct all Diſorder of the Paſſions, and to ſettle the Mind in Tranquillity, Peace, and Comfort. The primary and fundamental Doctrines of the Goſpel are, firſt, that of Original Sin, or our loſt, undone State by Nature; but this Diſeaſe, mortal and univerſal as it is in itſelf, finds its Remedy in that Redemption which is by *Jeſus Chriſt*. Secondly, the Impoſſibility of our being juſtified before God by any Works or Deſervings of our own: But

then

then here we are relieved from our Impotence and Misery by the free Offer of that Faith and Grace, which are abundantly sufficient for us. Thirdly, the Necessity of a spiritual Birth of a divine Life in the very Essence of our Souls, in order to which there is no help to be found in Man, for there is no Medicine for such spiritual Health in us: But here the Almighty Saviour stands engaged by his sacred Promise, that "to as many as will receive him He "will give Power to become the Sons of "God." Here is no other Ground of Despair in these Doctrines than that of being able to become our own Saviours, and such kind of Despairing must be allowed a necessary Step to right Believing.

Let us now briefly consider what Effect these, and the like evangelical Doctrines, when powerfully urged, are likely to have on different Persons, according to the Difference of their State and Disposition: The hardened Sinner and the impenetrable Infidel will mock and deride with the *Athenians*, or oppose and blaspheme with the *Jews*, whilst those of a more pliable Temper, and whose Hearts lye open to the Stroke of Conviction will be rouzed

from their Lethargy, and made to cry out, "What ſhall I do to be ſaved?" The Formuliſt, if his Ears be open to Inſtruction, will be taught, that the Kingdom of God ſtandeth not in external Forms and Modes of Religion, but in Power, and that the true Worſhipers are thoſe that worſhip the Father in Spirit and in Truth; And the Legaliſt, if he can be moved from his falſe Foundations, will here learn the Vanity of going about to eſtabliſh his own Righteouſneſs, and be driven to ſeek and ſue for that Righteouſneſs which is of God by Faith: Or, where theſe Doctrines prove inſufficient to perſuade, the Terrors of the Lord, as held forth in the Law, may be powerful to convince both the outward Sinner and the Phariſee, and compel them to give up both their Unrighteouſneſs and their Self-righteouſneſs; and this by breaking open the whited Sepulchre, and diſcovering the Rottenneſs and Corruption that are within; by making manifeſt the Purity and Holineſs of God's Nature, and the Impurity and Sinfulneſs of Man's Nature; by ſhewing the Perfection of God's Law, and the Imperfection of Man's beſt Obedience, and by laying open to the Conſcience the Sins of the Heart

Heart and the Sins of the Life, and ſo bringing into Judgment. Now it may ſo happen, that the ſame Terrors and Denunciations which are needful to pluck ſome as Fire-brands out of the Burning, may be turned by others of a deep complexional Melancholy into the Matter of their Deſpair, nay into ſuch a kind of it as may prove incurable, notwithſtanding the moſt ſkilful Applications both of the bodily and ſpiritual Phyſician; but this we cannot prevent, any more than ſome other obſtinate Diſtempers incident to the human Mind; the Law and the Goſpel muſt be enforced according to God's Appointment, and the Event be left with Him who can ſave by Fire as well as by Water, and is not obliged to give an account of theſe his Matters. But after all, theſe are to be conſidered as particular Inſtances, and therefore making no Part of a general Rule, for it is far otherwiſe, for the moſt Part, with Perſons who are exerciſed with ſtrong Fears concerning their ſpiritual Condition, and who under ſuch Circumſtances, are not only curable, but in the right way of their Cure, this Sickneſs being not unto Death, but for the Glory of God, that the Son of God

may be glorified hereby in the Salvation of their Souls.

Convictions on account of Sin, (which is the preparative Work for the Goſpel State, or the Kingdom of God within us) may not improperly be termed the Phyſic of the Soul, and in order to operate efficaciouſly it muſt act powerfully, for that ſorrowing after a godly ſort which it produces works great *Carefulneſs, Indignation, Vehement Deſire*, and *Self-Revenge*; it penetrates deep, even to the very Foundations, and ſometimes, for a while, ſpreads a horrible Gloomineſs over the Mind, the Party feeling the Sentence of Death in himſelf and ſubſcribing to the Juſtice of his own Condemnation. This was certainly the Caſe of *David* in that Day of his Complaint, when "the Arrows of the Lord ſtuck faſt "in his Soul, and his Fleſh trembled for "fear of his Judgments;" when he had "no Reſt in his Bones by Reaſon of his "Sin, and all God's Storms went over "him." The ſame is well underſtood in one degree or other by every experienced *Chriſtian*; and others would do well to beware how they ridicule or ſpeak lightly of ſuch diſtreſſing Perplexities — far better would

would it be for them that they were in the ſame Condition. Too many there are who being entirely ignorant in this way of God's dealing with Souls take upon them the Office of Adviſers, and ſo are apt in Caſes of this Nature to preſcribe improper Reliefs and falſe Comforts; they are for healing the Wound before it is ſearched and cleanſed, which cauſes it to ulcerate the more, not conſidering that this is not a Diſeaſe which is to be got rid of at any rate, and the ſooner the better, but a State which is to be paſſed through, figured by the Journeying of the *Iſraelites* through the Wilderneſs from *Ægypt* to *Canaan*. The Soul is here in its right way of Diſcipline, and placed at the Foot of *Mount Sinai* under Thundrings and Darkneſs and Fire, to make it ſenſible of its Sin, and of the terrible Majeſty of a Sin-avenging God, that ſo the Law may do its Office upon it as a Miniſtration of Condemnation, and act the Part of a School-maſter to lead it to *Chriſt*, as its only propitiatory Sacrifice, Righteouſneſs and Salvation. Thus the Way to *Sion* lies by the burning Mountain of *Sinai*, and *Moſes* with his correcting Rod conducts us to *Chriſt* through *John's* Baptiſm of Repentance, as

this prepares us for the Baptiſm of Regeneration. Theſe Perſons then are not mad, as the World ſuppoſes, but returning Sinners coming to their right Mind, as the prodigal Son is ſaid to have come to himſelf when he became ſenſible of his Folly and was brought to Repentance: They are under the Leadings of the Father to the Son, that the Son may preſent them to his Father cleanſed and redeemed by his Blood, and that the Holy Ghoſt, proceeding from the Father and the Son, may ſanctify them and make them a peculiar People holy in all Manner of Converſation and zealous of good Works.

Or if this muſt be called Madneſs, let it at leaſt be allowed a leſs dangerous kind of it than Preſumption and Madneſs in Sinning, as a wounded Conſcience affords more Hope than a benumbed or ſeared one. But do you herein ſhew that your Minds are ſet upon Righteouſneſs, and that you judge the thing that is right, O ye Sons of Men! Turn your Eyes to the great Bedlam of the World, where its Votaries are running mad at ſuch a rate after Folly and Riot, where Invention is racked to lull Conſcience aſleep, and where Millions are rocking themſ-

themſelves to ſpiritual Slumber in the Cradle of Death, and treat every faithful Watchman that ſounds the Alarm to rouze them from their falſe Peace, as the Enemy of their Repoſe: Caſt your Eyes, I ſay, on this Theatre of Vice and Frolick, this Fair of Vanity, where Prince *Abaddon* holds his perpetual Jubilee, and ſay which of theſe two Schools, *Chriſtianity* or the World, turns out the greater Number of mad Folks. Which would an Angel pronounce moſt rational and ſound in Mind? The ſordid Race of Mammoniſts, the giddy Tribe of Pleaſure-ſeekers, and the fantaſtic Croud of Faſhion-followers, or the poor broken-hearted *Chriſtian* lamenting his Sin and Miſery, and in the Power of divine Grace working out his Salvation with Fear and Trembling, and following a deſpiſed *Jeſus* through Mockery and Deriſion to eternal Bleſſedneſs and Glory? If you are not of the Number of the infatuated, you cannot heſitate a moment to reſolve the Queſtion aright; for Wiſdom is juſtified of her Children.

I have the longer inſiſted on the Subject of Experiences, as well becauſe all true Religion muſt both begin and end here, as be-

cauſe very few of our Theological Writers touch upon theſe Matters; and therefore whilſt ſome lay down excellent Rules for the practical Life, enforce the Obligations to a regular and decent Diſcharge of all the Parts of external Worſhip, or imbue the Mind with ſound and wholeſome Doctrines, let others be permitted, according to the Length of their Line, to launch out farther into the Deep, and there let down their Net for a Draught: Thus, whilſt ſome are inſtructed in the Principles, or Rudiments, of the Doctrine of *Chriſt*, and others are led on unto Perfection: Whilſt we deal out Milk to Babes, ſtrong Meat to thoſe that are of riper Age, and ſpeak the Wiſdom of God in a Myſtery to them that are perfect, the whole Body is edified in Love, and every Man hath Praiſe of God.

It is very certain that the greateſt Part in every Age and Place have ſtopt ſhort of the Truth and Subſtance, by reſting in the Outſide of Things; and therefore St. *Paul*, that great Preacher of inward and ſpiritual Religion, takes much Pains both with *Jew* and *Gentile* to convince them of their groſs Ignorance and Error in this Particular; for if the latter were in general ignorant of the true

true God, the former worſhiped Him not in Spirit and in Truth; if the latter bowed down to Stocks and Stones, the former idolized their Forms of Worſhip inſtead of worſhiping God, through their Forms; and ſo all had ſinned and come ſhort of the Glory of God. The *Jews* eſteemed themſelves the Choſen, the Temple of the Lord, and the Seed of the Covenant, and they pleaded their Circumciſion, their Prieſthood, their Temple-ſervices, and their Ordinances of divine Inſtitution as the Marks of their Election: And a peculiar People they certainly were, and choſen to diſtinguiſhed Favours and Privileges, but no otherwiſe elected to Salvation than as they continued in the Grace and walked in the Light and Love of God; "for he was not a "*Jew* which was one outwardly, neither was "that Circumciſion which was outward in "the Fleſh; but he was a *Jew* which was "one inwardly, and Circumciſion was that "of the Heart, in the Spirit and not in the "Letter;" the outward Ordinance repreſenting to them that Corruption of our Nature by original Sin which was to be cut off and renounced, and that they were to be a ſpiritual People, holy to the Lord, and

"born

" born again, not of the Will of the Flesh, " nor of the Will of Man, but of God."

And here we cannot but lament among the many sad Effects of the Fall, its having introduced such Grossness and Darkness into the Mind of Man, that it so hardly elevates itself to the Consideration of heavenly Things. From this Propensity to Matter and Sense Idolatry first took its Rise — Men wanted Objects of Worship that they could see with their bodily Eyes, and so adored the Host of Heaven, or Images of their own making: And hence it is that among those who profess to worship the true God so many are wholly taken up with what is external in Religion: " See what Manner of " Stones and great Buildings are here!" said one of the Disciples to our Lord: " And " *Jesus* answering said unto him: Seest " [admirest] thou these great Buildings; " There shall not be left one Stone upon " another that shall not be thrown down."

And as there is an outside Worship void of the Spirit of Devotion, which availeth not, so likewise there is an outside Knowledge in Religion, without the Spirit of Wisdom that profiteth not; for it is not a literal or historical Understanding of the

Scriptures

Scriptures that maketh wise unto Salvation: The Art of Criticism and Skill in Languages may make a fair Show in the Flesh, and procure us the Reputation of learned Men, but unless the Spirit give an affecting and edifying Interpretation of them, they will be but as a sealed Book to us in Things pertaining to God. St *Paul* disclaims all human Knowledge and Self Ability, considered separately from the divine Teachings of the Spirit, as insufficient for the Work of the Ministry — "Our "Sufficiency, says he, is of God, who "hath made us able Ministers of the New "Testament, not of the Letter, but of the "Spirit." These things rightly considered, there will be little need of an Apology for insisting, and that strenuously, upon the Necessity of the inward and spiritual Life, the Kingdom of God within us, as that divine Source from which alone all holy Desires, all good Counsels and all just Works can proceed; as that heavenly Light which alone gives true Wisdom, and makes all our other Knowledge and Learning of any real Benefit to us in the Christian Life; and as that Principle of Holiness which sanctifies all our Morality and Religious Services, and without which they are nothing worth.

It

It is further evident, that nothing leſs than calling People to the Spirit and Power of Godlineſs can be ſufficient at this time to bring about a Reformation both of Principles and Practice amongſt us; and moſt ſerious People think, that this was never more needed. That the beſt things when corrupted become the worſt, is a proverbial Truth, and if ſo, bad *Chriſtians* muſt be the worſt of Men. Corruption did perhaps never ſpread wider nor ſink deeper than at preſent; and the want of Truth and Juſtice in the Words and Dealings of *Chriſtians* is become our Reproach in the Mouths of *Turks* and Infidels: Nay, are not the Proviſions made by publick Appointment for the Redreſs of Injuſtice become, ſome how, ſo ſlow in Execution, ſo vexatious and burdenſome oftentimes in their Proceſs, that to ſuffer Oppreſſion in many Caſes is a leſs Evil than the tedious and expenſive Operation of its Remedy? What ſhall we ſay of the Sophiſtication of Wares and Merchandiſe, the abominable Adulteration of Medicinal Drugs and Liquors and other Frauds in Trade commonly practiſed, nay Frauds ſupported by cuſtomary Perjury: And laſtly, what ſhall we

we ſay of a Depravation of Manners ſo horrid and worſe than heatheniſh, that the very Savage *Indians* of *America* are afraid to ſuffer their Children to converſe with *certain Europeans* leſt they ſhould be corrupted by them*. Muſt not that be a falſe Charity that caſts its Mantle over ſuch national Sins as theſe? Muſt not that Zeal for Religion have loſt both its Name and Nature that can be ſilent here!

Laſtly, It is from a Revival of the Spirit of true *Chriſtianity* in the Hearts of Men alone that we can hope to ſee Peace reſtored on Earth among the divided Churches of *Chriſtendom*. Whilſt Religion reſides only in the reaſoning Part of Man, it is tinctured with all the Prejudices and Paſſions of his Nature, and his Reaſon will be ready to plead for or againſt the Truth, as Intereſt or Education ſways the Man, it being little better than that hired kind of Logic that wrangles at the Bar, whether it rails in the Pulpit, harangues in the Synod, or weilds the Club of Controverſy. Much of political and polemical Divinity is of this Sort. But the Wiſdom that is from Above, is firſt

* See the late Biſhop *Berkeley's* Tracts, and Dr. *Hales's* Advice to Dram Drinkers.

pure,

pure, then peaceable, gentle, full of Mercy, and without Partiality; for the ſame good Spirit that enlightens the Underſtanding, cleanſes the Heart from all Bitterneſs, Malice, and Hypocriſy, and therefore operates by Pureneſs, by Knowledge, by Love unfeigned. A Party Spirit, whether it be in Religion or Politics, proceeds from Littleneſs of Mind and Narrowneſs of Heart, and it puts out both the Eye of the Judgment and the Eye of Charity, and ſo hinders us from ſeeing the brighteſt Excellence in our Neighbour that is not juſt as high or low as ourſelves, as I heard a Man of Learning once ſay that he could not allow *Milton's Paradiſe Loſt* to be a good Book, becauſe written by an *Oliverian*. But the *Chriſtian* knows no ſuch Straitneſs, for his Bowels are enlarged towards all that will come within the Embrace of his Charity, which is as wide as the Eaſt is from the Weſt. He cannot wrangle and hate about Differences of Opinion, for he is got above them; his Call, his Univerſal Call is to Love, and he has adopted for his Motto that Saying of *Luther* — *In quo aliquid* Chriſti *video, illum diligo* — "In whomſoever I ſee any thing of *Chriſt*, "him

" him I love." In this Man, whereſoever he lives, and by what Name ſoever he is called, the Kingdom of *Chriſt* is come; and of ſuch heavenly Men and Women it will conſiſt in that enlarged glorious State of it which we are given to look for: And what if it be already begun on Earth?

I cannot conclude this Preliminary Diſcourſe better than with an Extract from Dr. *More's* Preface to *the Myſtery of Godlineſs*. After he had before aſſerted, that the End which all Parts of the Chriſtian Myſtery point at, is the Advancement and Triumph of the divine Life in the Soul, in the Exaltation of which God is moſt highly glorified, he declares his Belief of a future happy State of the Church when the Spirit and Power of the everlaſting Goſpel ſhall prevail in the Hearts of Men.

" There ſhall be, there ſhall be, moſt " certainly, a Time, when the Sun of Righ- " teouſneſs being riſen, *Ægyptian* Miſts and " Darkneſs ſhall be diſperſed: When all " the Filth and Droſs of the Church ſhall be " conſumed and purged away by the Ardor " of divine Love: When all Barbarity of " Manners, and filthy Superſtitions and Ido- " latries ſhall be ſent into the Lake of Fire

" and Brimſtone: When, finally, *Calvi-*
" *niſm*, *Lutheraniſm*, *Popery*, and what-
" ever other Diſtinctions, ſhall be melted
" down into one (which ſhall be inſtead of
" all) truly Catholic and Apoſtolic *Philadel-*
" *phianiſm*. Which Times that God would
" haſten, and thereto incline the Hearts of
" Chriſtian Princes and People, ought to
" be the fervent Deſire and Prayer of all
" good Men."

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SERMON

SERMON I.

The Sin and Danger of being ashamed of the Gospel.

ROMANS i. 16.

I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ; for it is the Power of God unto Salvation to every one that believeth.

IN the foregoing Verses the Apostle acquaints the Christians at *Rome* with his longing Desire to see them, declaring, that it was not through want of Good-will, but of Opportunity, that he had not yet made them a Visit: *Often-times*, says he, *I purposed to come unto you, but was let* (or hindered) *hitherto.* The same Lord who had called him to the Ministry, had Work for him to do elsewhere; and as his Time and Labours were consecrated to his Master's Service, so did he submit the Direction and Disposal of Himself and them to his good Pleasure. We may design or desire to serve

SERM. I. God in this, or that Place, or Way, but it may be more for his Honour, or the Good of his Church, that we be ordered to some other Post or Part: Thus *Paul* and *Timothy* were forbidden to preach the Word in *Asia*, and when they essayed to go from *Mysia* into *Bithynia*, the Spirit suffered them not, for the Lord had appointed them to preach the Word in *Macedonia*. Learn hence, that we must not think of being our own Masters, even in our best Intentions, but divest ourselves of all Self-will, and offer them up in Prayer to God for Direction, and then we need not doubt but that such Notices will be impressed upon our Minds, or such providential Occurrences cast in our Way, as will determine us to act in such a Manner, as will be most for the Glory of God. However, in this unlimited Resignation of ourselves and Undertakings to the Divine Conduct we may lawfully purpose and desire this or that good Act or Office, as St. *Paul* did to visit the Faithful at *Rome*: *I long*, says he, *to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual Gift, to the end you may be established, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual Faith both of you and me.* Blessed *Paul!* how art thou changed

changed from that persecuting *Saul*, who a little before breathed out Threatnings and Slaughter against the Disciples of the Holy *Jesus!* So powerful is both the constraining and restraining Grace of *Christ* to change the Rage of Lions into the Meekness of Lambs, and to turn all our Hatred into Love! We see then, that the Motive of the Apostle's earnest Desire to see and be present with the Faithful, to whom he sends this Epistle, was not to pass his Time with them merrily, in the way of what is now generally understood by good Fellowship, nor to live upon them at Free-cost; nothing of this kind was in his view; he sought not theirs but them, not their temporal good Things, but their spiritual Welfare, to build them up in the Faith by a holy Conversation, to instruct and encourage them in the Knowledge and Practice of the Christian Life, and to give and receive Consolation, mutually by comparing what great Things the Lord had done for their Souls: And O that there were more of these edifying Communications amongst us now-a-days when we meet together! How might we strengthen and comfort one another by such godly Conferences, and be able to say at the

End of every Visit, It is good for us to have been here! — But to proceed,

St. *Paul's* delaying to visit the Brethren at *Rome*, occasioned by his ministerial Labours in other Places, gave Occasion, as it seems, to some among them to represent it as the Effect of Fear, for *Rome* was at that Time the Capital City of the World; thither resorted the Philosophers and Learned from all Parts, there the Great and Wealthy lived in Pomp and Pleasure, and there the Tyrant *Nero* kept his Court: Such discouraging Circumstances some might think sufficient to deter even an Apostle from preaching the Gospel of *Christ*, and the self-denying Doctrines of his Religion in such a Place; but in thinking so they betrayed their Ignorance of St. *Paul*, and the Spirit he was of, for neither the Opposition of the Learned and Great Ones of the Earth, neither Bonds nor Imprisonments, nor even Death itself had any thing in them to be feared by him, who *counted not his Life dear unto himself, so that he might finish his Course with Joy, and the Ministry which he had received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the Grace of God.* But whether it was to obviate a Suspicion that might arise

or

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or to refel a Charge already formed againſt him, either by the Miſtake of Friends, or the Malice of Enemies, the Apoſtle who was ready on this, as on every other Occaſion, to give ſufficient Proof of his being an undaunted Workman, to whom the Lord had given the Spirit not of Fear but of Power, declares as follows; " As much as " in me is, I am ready to preach the Goſ- " pel to you that are at *Rome* alſo; for I am " not aſhamed of the Goſpel of *Chriſt*, for " it is the Power of God unto Salvation to " every one that believeth." As if he had ſaid, " Do not aſcribe my delaying to come " unto you to any Fear or Shame in me of " preaching *Chriſt* crucified in your great " City, the boaſted Miſtreſs of the World; " for however the Doctrine of the Croſs " may be deſpiſed, or rejected by the wiſe " and great Ones of this World, of which " there are many in that Metropolis, yet I " am ſo far from being aſhamed of it, that " it is my Rejoicing and Glory, for it is " the Power of God unto Salvation: I have " experienced the convincing and convert- " ing Power of it in myſelf, and it is equal- " ly powerful to produce the ſame Effects, " in all that hear it, with a Diſpoſition

SERM. I. " to receive it ; and therefore truſting " in that Almighty Saviour, whoſe Mi- " niſter I am, that he will give the ſame " Efficacy and Succeſs to the Word of his " Grace as heretofore, as much as in me " is, as far as I am left at Liberty, and not " elſewhere employed by my Lord, I am " ready to preach the Goſpel to you that " are at *Rome* alſo."

I ſhall *firſt* ſpeak briefly on the Power of Goſpel Salvation; and

Secondly, On the Danger and Sin of being aſhamed of it.

By the Goſpel of *Chriſt* is here meant the great Subject of Goſpel Doctrine, or Man's Redemption by *Jeſus Chriſt:* And this does confeſſedly carry in it moſt evident Signatures of divine Power, both in its external and internal Miniſtration; nay every thing leading to it, and preparing the World for it, was an Apparatus ſtampt with the Image and Superſcription of Omnipotence in every Part of the amazing Oeconomy: What Viſions, what Voices, what Prophecies, what extraordinary Providences, what aſtoniſhing Miracles, declared, foretold, and uſhered

uſhered into the World this myſterious God-Man? Behold him in his Entry as cloathed with Meanneſs and Mortality, (for human Nature in its beſt Eſtate is but Diſgrace, and the Difference betwixt its higheſt and loweſt, though much to our childiſh Conceptions, is nothing to God) yet ſee here the Power of the Creator manifeſted eſſentially in the Weakneſs of the Creature. Angels proclaim the Advent of the Infant King, and Wiſe-men from the Eaſt, by heavenly Direction, fall down and worſhip *him* who was no leſs the Light of the *Gentiles* than the Glory of his People *Iſrael*. How high, how low, how rich, how poor, how little, how great, is this wonderful Perſon! In him Extremes are reconciled; in him Contradiction and Oppoſition unite; God comes down to Man, Man is exalted to God; the Enmity between the two Natures is ſlain, and in him is laid the Foundation of Love, univerſal Love.—Glory to God in the Higheſt for Peace reſtored on Earth, and for Good-will towards Men! Let us view this ſecond great Repreſentative and the Saviour of Mankind in his Probation, in his Miniſtry, and in the Sequence of it: And here how invincible was he in his

SERM. I. Temptation! how patient in Sufferings! how mighty in Word and Deed! how faithful in Obedience! how perſevering unto the End! how victorious in his Death! how triumphant in his Reſurrection! how glorious in his Aſcenſion! *Truly this Man was the Son of God.*

But if this Myſtery of our Salvation, in the outward Oeconomy of it, is nothing leſs than the mighty Power of God, the exceeding Greatneſs and unſpeakable Riches of his Power and Goodneſs are perfected in the Miniſtration of the Spirit of Chriſt, whereby we are given to know him, and the Power of his Reſurrection in raiſing us from the Death of Sin unto the Life of Righteouſneſs. If *Chriſt*, repreſented to us under the Types and Shadows of the Law, (that Miniſtration of Condemnation) was glorious: If that ſame *Chriſt* manifeſted in the Fleſh, to make Atonement for Sin, to fulfil all Righteouſneſs, and to deſtroy the Works of the Devil, was ſtill more glorious: *Chriſt* reigning in the Hearts of the Faithful, through the regenerating Power of the Holy Ghoſt, is moſt glorious of all. This is the third, laſt, and higheſt Diſpenſation of the divine Goodneſs on this Side of our

our glorious Immortality, and to which every preceding one was ſubordinate and ſubſervient: Here Redemption attains to the Limit of its Accompliſhment in Man; here Grace and Truth meet together; here Righteouſneſs and Peace kiſs each other, and the Bridegroom rejoiceth over the Bride, for *the Marriage of the Lamb is come, and his Wife hath made herſelf ready.* Thus we ſee that the Kingdom of God is not in Word, nor in Form, nor in Profeſſion, but in Power: It is the Power of the Holy Ghoſt in the Word that begetteth Faith in the Heart of the Hearer, and by Virtue of the ſame divine Power it is that the Corruptions of our Nature are ſubdued, our Hearts purified, and we enabled to reſiſt the Devil, and overcome the World thro' Faith: And laſtly, through the powerful Energy of this holy Principle it is that we are born again of God, and joined to the Lord in one Spirit, and ſo have Fellowſhip with the Father and with the Son: So that from the Beginning of our Converſion to the End of our Sanctification we are ſaved, not of ourſelves, but by that Grace of the Goſpel, through Faith, which is the Power of God unto Salvation to every one that be-

SERM. I. believeth. As to Unbelievers, ſuch whoſe Hearts are hardened againſt all Goſpel Impreſſions through the Deceitfulneſs of Sin, it is not ſo with them: In theſe the Word of God faileth of its firſt Work, *viz.* to beget the Beginning of Faith in their Hearts; and therefore the Word, though preached again and again, doth not profit them, not being mixed with Faith in them that hear it: Hence it was that ſome could mock even at the preaching of an Apoſtle, and afford him no other Return for his Labours of Love, in declaring to them JESUS, and the RESURRECTION, than that deriding Queſtion, *What will this Babbler ſay?* And hence it is, even at this Day alſo, that God manifeſt in the Fleſh, and revealed in our Hearts by his Spirit, with other Things pertaining to this great Myſtery of our Redemption, are either a Stumbling-block, or appear no better than Fooliſhneſs, to the fleſhly Wiſdom of ſo many amongſt us, for in that Way of Knowledge they cannot know them, becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned: But to every one that believeth the Goſpel of *Chriſt* is *the Power of God unto Salvation:* Powerful are the Convictions it carries with it, and powerful its

its Comforts; powerful it is to eſtabliſh, ſtrengthen and ſettle that Faith which its own Power firſt begat, and powerful to enable the Man of God to work Righteouſneſs, to pull down the ſtrong Holds of Sin and Satan, and to bring every Thought, and Imagination under Obedience to Chriſt. Thus by Grace are we ſaved through Faith from firſt to laſt, for by this Faith we firſt turn from Sin to God, herein we ſtand, herein we conquer, and ſo attain to the End of our Faith, even the Salvation of our Souls. SERM. I.

One main Reaſon why ſo few conceive rightly of the Power of Goſpel Salvation, is their Ignorance concerning that Power of Sin in themſelves, from which it is to ſave them: Did they but ſee how the Myſtery of Iniquity worketh Sin and Death and ſubſtantial Enmity againſt God in their Souls, they would ſoon be brought to acknowledge and adore the great Myſtery of Godlineſs as nothing leſs than the Right Hand of the Lord put forth to deſtroy theſe Works of the Devil in Man. Were Original Sin nothing more than a mere Imputation of *Adam's* Guilt to his Poſterity, as ſome abſurdly ſuppoſe, then a mere Imputation

of

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of Innocence would be sufficient for the Discharge of it, without any thing more; but if it consist, as it most certainly does, in the actual Derivation of a corrupt Nature from a corrupt Original, according to this necessary Consequence that, as is the Root such are the Branches; in this Case, nothing less than an Exertion of Omnipotence, equal to that of Creation, can set all right again; nothing but the exceeding Greatness and effectual Working of that same Power of God which wrought in *Christ* when he raised him from the Dead, can raise a Soul from the Death of Sin unto a Life of Righteousness, and *turn us from Darkness to Light, and from the Power of Satan unto God, that we may receive Remission of Sins and Inheritance among them which are sanctified by Faith in Jesus.* By that Power of God unto Salvation then declared in the Gospel, we are to understand the victorious Power of *Jesus*, our King and Conqueror, subduing his and our Enemies under his Feet; for in this little World of Man are two Kingdoms at War, Heaven against Hell, and *Christ* against *Belial*, and where these are the Powers engaged what is thy utmost Strength, O Man, but as the shaking of a Leaf?

The

The Battle is the Lord's, and it is his own Arm that getteth himſelf the Victory: Go not up then to the Fight, but ſtand thou ſtill and ſee the Salvation of God, for *in Quietneſs and Confidence ſhall be thy Strength.* In vain we go about to trim and adorn ourſelves with our Profeſſions and ſelf-practiſed Reformations, as with the true Wedding-garment, whilſt the Man of Sin is in full Poſſeſſion of the Heart, for tho' theſe Things may be profitable unto Men, they cannot commend us unto God; no Plant that our heavenly Father hath not planted can bring forth Fruit good and acceptable in his Sight. This new Plantation, Production, or Creation, is every where in Scripture aſcribed to the mighty Power of God, and to nothing that is in Man, whether it be a notional Knowledge of our Redemption by *Chriſt*, the Doctrine of a ſelf appropriated Election, or any Works done in his own Strength, for to uſe the Words of a pious Author: "All the Powers of "Fleſh and Blood, that is, of Man in his "fleſhly Nature, are utterly inſufficient for "this Purpoſe; and if you take never "ſo much pains to adorn your outward "Man with a civil, and even Saint-like "Be-

" Behaviour, as thinking any thing to be " Converſion but that which is effected by " the Power of the Holy Ghoſt, you en- " tirely miſtake your Caſe, and will be in " Danger of rejecting your Remedy*."

Secondly, If ſuch and ſo powerful be the Goſpel of *Chriſt*, even the Power of God unto Salvation, one would be apt to think cautionary Dehortations concerning the Sin and Danger of being aſhamed of it almoſt needleſs; but this is not ſo, for there is a Croſs and a Reproach attending it, to exerciſe the Faith and try the Fidelity of the Servants of *Chriſt*, who is upon this Account no leſs a Rock of Offence, than a Rock of Salvation to many. Human Reſpects have always been a great Snare even to Perſons of a good Diſpoſition, in the Ways both of Virtue and Godlineſs, which gave Occaſion to that Caution of the Son of *Sirach*, " That we ſuffer not the Reverence " of any Man to cauſe us to fall." And this would hold true of the Goſpel of *Chriſt* in a more eſpecial Manner, as the Genius and Spirit of it are directly contrary to thoſe

* See an excellent little Book, intitled, *Practical Lectures on the Church Catechiſm*. By the Revd. Mr. *Adam*. Printed for *C. Hitch*, in *Paternoſter-Row*.

which

which govern the World: Hence it is that God and the World, *i. e.* People who live only to Time, and follow the Propenſions and Gratifications of corrupt Nature, are all along ſpoken of in the New Teſtament as contrary the one to the other: The World is there ſaid to lie in Wickedneſs, and therefore we are commanded neither to love nor to be conformed to it: And foraſmuch as the Reſpect and Praiſe of worldly People cannot be acquired nor preſerved, unleſs in ſome meaſure our Thoughts be as their Thoughts, and our Ways as their Ways, we find a Wo denounced againſt thoſe whom all Men ſpeak well of: But as the pious Mr. *Burkit* obſerves, "The World has all along taken effectual care, by their cruel Mockings, bitter Reproaches, and ſharp Invectives, to free *Chriſt's* faithful Servants from the Danger of this Wo." Had we a particular Hiſtory of the Old World, I doubt not but this Obſervation would ſtand verified in the Treatment of *Enoch* and *Noah*, as it does in that of *Lot*, the Patriarchs, and the Prophets, of *Chriſt*, the Apoſtles, and moſt other eminent Preachers of Rightouſneſs downwards, confirming St. *Paul's* Aſſertion, that, "As he

"who

SERM. I. " who was born after the Flesh persecuted " him who was born after the Spirit in " Times past, so it is now."

In vain we plead the Establishment of Christianity, under the Protection and Countenance of the civil Power, to evade the Force of this Truth: Rulers may compile good Articles, and good Canons, and frame wholesome Laws for the Government and Polity of the outward Church, but the Spirit and Power of Godliness they can neither give nor secure Respect to: A pleasure-loving, sensual, sinful World, must upon Principle be at Enmity with the Children of the Kingdom, who have turned their Backs upon what they idolize, and have set their Faces full for *Zion*; and consequently the Reproach of *Christ* will never fail to be the Badge of the true Christian's Discipleship; for this he is prepared, and in so many Places exhorted and encouraged to endure the Cross, and despise the Shame, after the Example of his blessed Master.

Beware then, O Christian, how thou promisest to thyself Ease and Security here, saying, Peace, Peace; for thou art engaged in a Warfare which ends not on this Side the Grave, and therefore thou must persevere

vere in the Combat like a valiant Soldier, and be faithful unto Death, as thou expecteſt to receive a Crown of Life. Beware how thou feedeſt thyſelf with vain Hopes of the Riches and Honours of this World, whilſt ſo conſiderable a Share of them is lodged in the Hands of its own Children, and which are therefore a Kind of forbidden Fruit which thou canſt hardly touch, without wounding thy Conſcience: Conſider, thou art a Pilgrim on thy Way to a better Country, and needeſt but little for thy Journey; much would be an Incumbrance, and perhaps thou haſt already more than thy Maſter had, and yet he was therewith content: And as to the Favour and Friendſhip of the World, it would only prove a Snare to thee, for thou canſt no more pleaſe two Maſters ſo contrary by Nature, and in the Services they require of thee, than thou canſt reconcile Light with Darkneſs: Why then do we go on halving it betwixt God and *Mammon*, catching at heavenly Things with one Hand, and at earthly Things with the other; let us be cold or hot, let us declare for God or *Baal:* If we worſhip the Beaſt in our Hearts, why do we refuſe to receive his Mark in our Foreheads? Or if

SERM. I. we are really Disciples of a crucified Master, why do we flinch at bearing the Cross after him, seeing it is Honour enough for the Servant to be as his Lord? Nor will he own them at the last Day, who are now ashamed to confess him before Men in a Life and Conversation becoming the Gospel. Besides, whilst we stand ballancing betwixt Christ and the World, our Lives are more miserable than those of the very brute Beasts: The almost Christian is crucified betwixt Heaven and Earth, without having any Portion in the good Things either of this Life, or of that which is to come. Thus we seek to avoid the Reproach of the Cross of *Christ*, which would set our Hearts at Liberty, and enrich us with spiritual Blessings, and so fall under the Reproach of Conscience which worketh Sorrow and Death, and enslaves us to the most tormenting Fears: We assent unto the Truth with the Understanding, and so are speculative Believers, but through the prevailing Power of Human Respects suffer it not to take Root in our Hearts, that it may become a Divine Faith, bringing forth Fruits unto Holiness, and filling us with all Joy and Peace in Believing: How can ye believe

(to

(to the ſaving of the Soul) who receive Honour one of another, and ſeek not the Honour that cometh from God only?

But if ſome come ſhort of the Crown thro' the Fear or Shame of the Croſs, others add to the Weight of their Croſs by refuſing to bear it now; they cannot endure the Thought of loſing all Intereſt in *Chriſt*, and therefore reſolve to follow him, but firſt deſire Leave to do this or that; they want perhaps to get a little more of this World's Goods, or wait for ſome more favourable Seaſon to declare for *Chriſt*, when there may be leſs of Danger, or Scandal in the Croſs; but either ſuch Limitations and Reſerves will not be allowed us, or, if the Lord bear with our Weakneſs in this Thing for a Time, he is ſure to reckon with us for it afterwards. When *Peter*, through Fear and Shame, denied his Maſter, he little thought what Anguiſh and Bitterneſs of Soul that Unfaithfulneſs would coſt him; for *Peter* muſt be deeply ſorry for that Fear, and aſhamed of that Shame, and alſo ſuffer for his Maſter at laſt. It is probable, that *Nicodemus*, the Ruler, and the rich *Joſeph* of *Arimathæa*, thought it ſufficient for them to be Diſciples of *Jeſus* in ſecret; but this

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would not ſerve their turn, and they who were aſhamed to own him publickly in his Life-time, (for Fear of the *Jews*) muſt be brought to own him, in his Death, under the additional reputed Diſgrace of a crucified Malefactor. Thus every Chriſtian, after the Example of *Jonah*, pays dear for his Unfaithfulneſs, and after all his Reluctance muſt do the Work which his Lord has appointed for him; but then he loſes the Satisfaction and Praiſe that would attend a willing and chearful Obedience, and ſuffers more from being dragged to the Croſs than he would from a patient enduring of its Weight.

It is eaſy to foreſee, that this and every other Repreſentation of Chriſtianity in the View of a ſuffering and ſelf-denying Religion, will be ill received by many; but thoſe Words of our Lord, *If any Man will come after me, let him deny Himſelf, and take up his Croſs, and follow me*, contain the indiſpenſable Condition of our Diſcipleſhip in every Age of the Church, whilſt it continues in a militant State. Sit down then, Profeſſors, and count the Coſt of being a Chriſtian; for you muſt not think of ſacrificing to the Lord your God, of that which coſts

coſts you nothing, and perhaps this will coſt you more than you are willing to pay: As firſt it will coſt you the Love of the World, for, *If any Man love the World, the Love of the Father is not in him*; ſecondly, it will coſt you the World's Love for you, *If ye were of the World the World would love its own, but becauſe ye are not of the World, but I have choſen you out of the World, therefore the World hateth you.* The Chriſtian cannot take Pleaſure in the Company of vicious, and diſorderly, nor yet of vain Perſons, however he may have had his Converſation with ſuch in Times paſt, he has now neither Time nor Inclination for Vanity, and therefore to all theſe he ſaith, What have I to do with you, get ye behind me? my Delight is henceforth in them that excel in Virtue, Men fearing God and working Righteouſneſs. And, thirdly, This will coſt him much of Character with thoſe whoſe Ways are not as his Ways: They will ſay of him, This Fellow is a Judge, to condemn us and our Doings; or, perhaps, that he is beſide himſelf; and thus he muſt bear the Reproach of Chriſt. And, laſtly, it will coſt you the Love of Self, *For even Chriſt pleaſed not himſelf*, and therefore all

SERM. I. Self-will, Self-seeking, and Self-pleasing must be offered up in Sacrifice to God, that his Will may be done in us, and by us, without any Resistance on our Part. In this total Surrender of Self the Christian walks at Liberty, and finds Peace and Rest to his Soul; for it may be affirmed of a Truth, that his most slavish Fears, and tormenting Bondage, are occasioned by some Idol not yet cast out, some Opposition in his own Will to that of God, and therefore our Lord saith, *Unless a Man forsake all that he hath, he cannot be my Disciple.*

Thus we find that it will cost much to be a Christian, and that if we mean to purchase this goodly Pearl of Gospel Salvation, we must keep back no Part of the Price, but sell all that we have, to give in Exchange for it. But how hard is this Doctrine! how few can bear it! what Pleadings of Nature, what Torturing of the Scriptures, what ingenious Pretences, what learned Evasions in Favour of the Sin that most easily besets us, and to reconcile Duty with Inclination! How great is thy Patience, O loving Lord! towards Sinners, whilst we refuse to hear and accept thy loud Calls, and gracious Invitations to come unto thee,

that

that we may have Life, *Behold, I ſtand at the Door*, ſays Chriſt, *and knock, if any Man hear my Voice and open the Door, I will come in to him, and will ſup with him, and he with me.* But alas! my Brethren, how do we lock and bar the Door againſt him, and will neither go to him, nor ſuffer him to come to us, but ſerve him as the Men of *Bethlehem* did of old? Inſomuch that it is to be feared, as to many, that if the Language of their Hearts were put into plain Speech, it would be on this wiſe: My carnal Acquaintance, and worldly Friends, thoſe Partakers with me in the Luſts and Pleaſures which my Soul loveth, are come to lodge and abide with me; and the Company of a poor deſpiſed *Jeſus* would diſgrace me in their Sight, blaſt my Character, give a Check to good Fellowſhip, and moreover ruin my Hopes and Intereſt in the World; depart therefore, for there is no Room for thee in the Inn of my Soul: However, I will not utterly diſown thee, nay, I will ſpeak of thee as reſpectfully as I decently can; but as to receiving thee for my Gueſt, or profeſſing any Intimacy with thee, in this Thing I pray thee have me excuſed. But what is the Reply that ſuch

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a falſe ungrateful Wretch has to expect? What but this? Know, O Sinner, that as thou haſt rejected the Counſel of God againſt thyſelf, and ſhutteſt the Door againſt the Viſits of my Grace and Salvation now, behold the Time cometh, when thou ſhalt knock at the Door of Mercy and find no Admittance thyſelf, but receive for Anſwer, Depart from me, I know you not; for, *whoſoever ſhall be aſhamed of me, and of my Words, in this adulterous and ſinful Generation, of him alſo ſhall the Son of Man be aſhamed, when he cometh in the Glory of his Father with the holy Angels.* But God forbid, that as ſome Men glory in their Shame, ſo we ſhould be aſhamed of that which is our higheſt Glory, aſhamed of owning and living to him, who was not aſhamed of dying for us. Brethren, the Time is ſhort, and the Day of the Lord is nigh at Hand; let us with the Eye of Faith behold it as preſent, and ſee the everlaſting Doors of Heaven wide open preſenting to our View the Son of God: Behold! he comes to Judgment with Myriads of Angels: the Throne is ſet, and a Rain-bow round about the Throne: the Books are opened, and the World kneels before him. How does

all created Nature bear a Part in this dreadful Solemnity! The Sun is darkened before the Brightneſs of his Majeſty; the Heavens paſs away with a great Noiſe, and the Elements melt with fervent Heat. Whither now will ye flee from his Preſence, who were afraid to confeſs the Lord *Jeſus* before Men? Could you climb up into the higheſt Heaven, lo! that is the Court of this great King; if you go down into Hell, behold, there is your Place of Torment: If you could take the Wings of the Morning, that you might dwell in the uttermoſt Parts of, or could go down into the Depth of the Earth, and ſay unto the Darkneſs, Thou ſhalt cover me; yet his all-ſeeing Eye ſhall find you out, his mighty Hand ſhall pluck you thence: Beſides, the Sea ſhall boil, as in the Words of *Job*, like a Pot of Ointment, the Earth alſo, and the Works that are therein, ſhall be burnt up. O how great muſt be the Confuſion of thoſe who were once aſhamed of him whom all the Hoſt of Heaven delighteth to Honour! Pardon, O Holy Jeſus whereinſoever we have been offended becauſe of thee! and grant, that henceforth, if called to it, we may eſteem the Reproach of *Chriſt* greater Riches

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Riches than the Treaſures of the whole Earth; For thou art the King of Saints; Thou art the Lord of Glory. To conclude,

Have you, my Brethren, found of a Truth, by the Evidence of a living Faith, that the Goſpel of Chriſt is the Power of God unto Salvation? If ſo, it has indeed been to you, what its Name imports, *Glad Tidings.* This, I truſt, is the Caſe with ſome, and it is my Heart's Deſire and Prayer to God, that it may be ſo with all of us, for happy are the People that are in ſuch a Caſe, and only they.

As to you who have not yet found this goodly Pearl of great Price, let me intreat you, let me adjure you by the living God, that you ſeek it earneſtly, that you ſeek it inſtantly: You need not ſay, whither ſhall we go, and in what Communion of Chriſtians may it be found? for *Chriſt* is not far from any one of you, nay, as you have juſt now heard, he ſtands at the Door of every Heart; do not then deny Admittance to ſo kind, ſo honourable a Gueſt; for, my Brethren, he is your Saviour, the Light, the Love, the Salvation of God, the Lord by whom alone you can eſcape Death: Such is the Gueſt that intreats you to receive him,

and

and indeed he will well requite your Love in ſo doing, for as many as receive him, to them will he give Power to become the Sons of God. O let me plead with you yet again, for it is for Life, even the Life of your Souls; I pray ye then be ye reconciled to God, in the Son of his Love: The Lord, even the Lord *Jeſus*, is deſirous to come into his Temple, which Temple ye are: Perſiſt not then in refuſing him Entrance, to the infinite Wrong and Damage of your Souls; for if he depart, and return no more, you are undone for ever, and better were it for you that you had never been born; for though he is the Lamb of God, meek and gentle to humble penitent Sinners, loving them freely, and cleanſing them thoroughly from all their Sins, by his moſt precious Blood; yet is he alſo the Lion of the Tribe of *Judah*, to the Obſtinate and Incorrigible. *Kiſs then the Son, leſt he be angry, and ſo ye periſh from the right Way, if his Wrath be kindled, yea but a little:* for as he is the Power of God unto Salvation to every one that believeth and receiveth him, ſo will he, at the laſt Day, be the Power of God unto Deſtruction to every one that ſhall have rejected him; powerful in

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in offended Majeſty, when he ſhall " be re-
" vealed from Heaven, with his mighty
" Angels, in flaming Fire, taking Vengeance
" of them that know not God, and that
" obey not the Goſpel of our Lord *Jeſus*
" *Chriſt*, who ſhall be puniſhed with ever-
" laſting Deſtruction from the Preſence of
" the Lord, and from the Glory of his
" Power, when he ſhall come to be glo-
" rified in his Saints, and to be admired in
" all them that believe."

Finally, Let me beſeech you, by the Mercies of God, that ye receive not the Grace of God in vain, and whilſt the Goſpel ſounds in your Ears, that you ſhut not your Hearts againſt it, but turn unto the Lord in Repentance and Faith, who is willing and deſirous to turn you away from your Iniquities that they may not be your Ruin: And, for your Encouragement I ſpeak it, though in Times paſt ye have been diſobedient, ungodly, Deſpiſers, nay Perſecutors of them that are good, yet foraſmuch as ye did it ignorantly and in Unbelief, ye ſhall obtain Mercy, for the Lord is merciful, loving and gracious, and rejecteth no returning contrite Sinner, for he hath ſaid, *Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wiſe caſt out.*

out. He will bleſs your Sorrows to you, comfort your Hearts with a Senſe of pardoning Grace, and ſanctify you wholly in Spirit, Soul and Body, and you ſhall know of a Truth, as concerning the Goſpel of *Chriſt*; *That it is the Power of God unto Salvation.* SERM. I.

SER-

SERMON II.

The Inward Glory of the true Believer.

PSALM xlv. 14.

The King's Daughter is all glorious within—

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HOwever this Pſalm might be compoſed on the Occaſion of King *Solomon's* Marriage with the Daughter of *Pharaoh*, King of *Egypt*, yet the Scope and Intendment of it is ſpiritual, pointing out to us the myſtical Marriage between *Chriſt* and his Church; and therefore if we mean to make a right Uſe and Improvement of this Portion of Scripture, we muſt lift up our Minds from earthly to heavenly Things, *for a greater than* Solomon *is here.*

The Scriptures are compared, by a Father of the Church, to the Manna that fell in the Wilderneſs, which is ſuppoſed to have

have had a Taſte accommodated to the Palate of the Eater: ſo, the ſacred Writings afford ſomething ſuitable to the Taſte of every Reader: The Hiſtorian, the Orator, the Critic, find each of them herein Matter for the Exerciſe of their reſpective Talents; the carnal Man readeth the Scriptures with a carnal Eye, and therefore only findeth in them a carnal Senſe: The Moraliſt there diſcovers excellent Rules for the Conduct of the outward Life, but not having Eyes to ſee farther, he diſcerneth not the Wiſdom of God in a Myſtery; whilſt the ſpiritual Man eateth of the hidden Manna, and ſearcheth out the deep Things of God, comparing ſpiritual Things with ſpiritual, for they are only ſpiritually diſcerned: To ſuch a one the Scriptures are Meat indeed, and Drink indeed; and whilſt others are detained below in that Faith of the Letter that killeth, he aſcendeth into the Preſence Chamber of the moſt High, by the Faith of the Spirit that giveth Life: To him the *Pſalm* from whence the Text is taken is like *Jacob's* Ladder which reached from Earth to Heaven, on which he aſcends from the Repreſentation of an earthly Marriage to the Contemplation of that bleſſed Union which

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which ſubſiſts betwixt Chriſt, the King of Glory, and his Spouſe the Church: And, indeed, unleſs we allow that theſe Things are an Allegory, neither the Pſalm before us, nor the Song of *Solomon*, carry in them any further Profit, or Improvement to a religious Reader, than a beautiful Ode or a dramatic Poem, in the Subjects of which we are no Ways concerned; nay, are rather apt to excite Ideas ill ſuiting with the Purity of a Chriſtian Mind: But *to the pure all Things are pure.* That the ſpiritual Senſe here mentioned does belong to theſe divine Writings ſtands confirmed by the Judgment of holy Men, in all Ages of the Church, who by ſuch a Uſe and Application of them in their Expoſitions, Meditations, and Prayers, have made them ſubſervient to the Purpoſes of an elevated Piety. But not to detain you any longer from the Text, I proceed to explain,

Firſt, Who is meant by the King's Daughter: And

Secondly, In what Senſe ſhe is *all glorious within.*

And *Firſt*, By the King's Daughter is meant, the Church of *Chriſt*; by which we are

are not to understand any one particular outward Church, according to the narrow and confined Notion of some concerning that Word, but the whole collective Body of holy Souls, under whatever Dispensation they have lived, or however dispersed over the Face of the whole Earth: Of this Multitude, gathered out of all Nations and Languages, which no Man can number, is composed that Church, which *Christ so loved* that he gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the Washing of Water by the Word, that he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having Spot or Wrinkle, or any such Thing, but that it should be holy and without Blemish. This is the heavenly *Jerusalem*, whose Foundation is on the holy Hills, and whose Builder and Maker is God: Here are the Gates of *Sion*, which the Lord loveth more than all the Dwellings of *Jacob*.— Such excellent Things are spoken of thee, Thou City of God! We profess to believe in the Communion of Saints; now, this is the blessed Fellowship here spoken of, and is called the Bride, the Lamb's Wife: For the Saints in Heaven and the Saints on Earth constitute but one Family, and one Body,

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of which *Chriſt* is not only the Political, but the influencing Head; they are Partakers of the ſame Grace of divine Love, and will ſhortly partake together in the ſame Glory: Nay the Faithful, whilſt on Earth, are ſaid to be bleſſed with ſpiritual Bleſſings in heavenly Places in *Chriſt*, for by their Union with him their Right and Title to theſe cannot fail them, for if *Chriſt* is theirs, in Him they have all Things; and Nothing but this thin Partition of Mortality hinders the Saints militant from joining Society with their fellow Members the Saints triumphant, who now wait in joyful Expectation of that Time, when God ſhall accompliſh the Number of his Elect, and haſten his Kingdom; and when all the angelic Hoſt ſhall celebrate the happy Day, ſaying, *Let us be glad and rejoice, and give Honour to God, for the Marriage of the Lamb is come, and his Wife hath made herſelf ready.*

It was to bring about this myſtical Marriage that the Son of God condeſcended to take our Nature upon him; for it is not poſſible there ſhould be an Union betwixt Perſons or Things that ſubſiſt not in one common Nature: Now in order to Man's Sal-

Salvation, the Image of God must be replaced in his Soul, he must again be made Partaker of that divine Nature from which he had fallen: But Man was no more capable of effecting this of himself, than of plucking the Stars from the Firmament; and therefore it must needs be that *Jesus Christ* communicate himself, in our Nature, to all that will receive him, that they may have Power to become the Sons of God, otherwise there could be no Redemption for them: This the holy Angels knew full well, and therefore in Testimony of their friendly Joy for Peace restored on Earth, and such an amazing Manifestation of Good-will towards Men, sang Praises to the eternal King at the Birth of the incarnate God.

This Conjunction of the divine and human Natures in the Person of our Lord for the Salvation of Mankind is represented to us in the Gospel under the Parable of a Marriage which a certain King made for his Son, and all to whom the Gospel is preached do receive a particular Invitation to the Marriage Feast: You, my Brethren, have often been called to share in the Blessedness of this sacred Solemnity, and I do at this time repeat the Invitation, in my Master's

Name, and declare unto you, that all Things are prepared, and the Wedding is ready: Why then are not you ready alſo? Wherefore do you make Excuſes, and refuſe to accept this Meſſage of Peace, to come to this Feaſt of Love, which the King of Heaven has prepared for you? Behold! we are Ambaſſadors for *Chriſt*, as though God did beſeech you by us; We pray you in *Chriſt's* ſtead, that ye be willing to be reconciled to God, who thus ſhews himſelf both willing and deſirous to be reconciled to you: Nay, you are called, every Soul of you, to the Honour of being the King's Daughter, by a Marriage with the King's Son, for ſuch Honour have all his Saints: It is not enough that he has married our Nature, unleſs he be joined in ſpiritual Wedlock to our Souls in particular, for *Chriſt* in us is the only Hope and Earneſt of our Glory, who ſpeaking to his heavenly Father of the Souls which he had given him, ſaith; *I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one. I have declared unto them thy Name, and will declare it, that the Love wherewith thou haſt loved me, may be in them, and I in them.*

Behold,

Behold, my Brethren, what Manner of Love the Father hath beſtowed upon us, that we ſhould be called the Children of the moſt High, even Sons and Daughters of God! Behold how *Jeſus* loved us, in that he took the Miſeries of our Nature upon Him, that He might beſtow the Dignity and Bleſſedneſs of his Nature upon us! We read that *Sampſon* went down to *Timnath*, and took unto himſelf a Wife of the Daughters of the *Philiſtines*, who were Idolaters and Enemies to *Iſrael*; that *Boaz* eſpouſed *Ruth*, a poor *Moabiteſs*; and that *Hoſea*, at the Command of God, married a Wife of Whoredoms. Wherefore are theſe Things mentioned, but for our Inſtruction? and to teach us, how much more the Son of God hath condeſcended for our Sakes in marrying us to Himſelf, when we were poor indeed, and had Nothing to bring him, but the filthy Rags of our Wretchedneſs and Sinfulneſs; when we were alienated from him both by original and actual Defilement, nay, even Enemies to his Government by open and repeated Rebellions, and moſt unworthy of his Embraces by our ſpiritual Whoredoms with the Creatures on which we had ſet our Loves. SERM. II.

It is no leſs worthy of being remarked, for to that end it is written, that in the Line of Chriſt according to the Fleſh we meet with ſome Sins of a Crimſon ſtain recorded, as Inceſt, Whoredom, Adultery, and Murder, the firſt in the Inſtance of *Judah* and *Thamar*, the ſecond in that of *Rahab*, and the two laſt in the Hiſtory of *David* and *Bath-ſheba:* now ſome perhaps may wiſh that theſe Marks of Infamy had not been recorded in the Genealogy of Chriſt, as tending to diſgrace his Family, and to bring a Reproach upon his Birth: But how blind and ſottiſh is the Wiſdom of Man in things pertaining to that God whoſe Thoughts are not as our Thoughts! For to the end that our Hope may be confirmed and our Faith eſtabliſhed are theſe things written. If *Jeſus Chriſt*, according to ſuch like Notions of Honour, were not to have come but of a ſpotleſs Family, how ſhould He be of the Seed of *Abraham?* nay, how could He have been a Deſcendant from *Adam!* Who then muſt have born our Sins and made Atonement for Tranſgreſſors? and if He was to bear our Sins tho' ſpotleſs in Himſelf, was He to bear our leſſer and not our greater Sins alſo? Yea, for this Cauſe came He into the World, that He might

might be allied to the Chief of Sinners, that so He might shew Mercy to the Chief of Sinners. See, how the Goodness of God triumphs over the feeble Objections of cavilling Reason, in that a Saviour was manifested where the greatest Need of Him stands confessed, and that where Sin abounded, there Grace hath much more abounded! "O the depth of the Riches of the Wisdom, "and Knowledge and Mercies of God!" SERM. II.

But I pass on to the Second Proposition, which was to shew in what Sense *the King's Daughter*, as meant of the Church of Christ, *is all glorious within.*

And this she is by her Espousals to Christ, and not before — "I have espoused you, says the Apostle to the *Corinthians*, "to one "Husband, that I may present you as a "chaste Virgin to Christ."

Before the Heart is turned to God in Faith, however highly we may think of ourselves, we are all as an unclean thing; our best Works (as is affirmed in the Thirteenth Article of our Church) have in them the Nature of Sin, and Iniquity is written upon the Face of all our holy things: And therefore we doubt not to pronounce concerning

SERM. II. every one in his natural unconverted State, before the Grace of Chriſt is ſuffered to ſtir and work in his Heart, that he can do nothing but Sin; whether he eat or drank, buy or ſell, lend or borrow, go to Church or ſtay at home, nay, whatever is in his Thoughts, Words, Deſires or Actions, it is all Sin — "the very plowing of the wicked is Sin," ſays *Solomon*; and the Reaſon is obvious: Such a Perſon only follows the Motions of corrupt Nature in all that he does, and therefore as the Principle that governs him is evil, ſo muſt every thing be that proceeds from it: Alluding to this Truth are thoſe Words of *Job*, "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one." But when the Soul becomes ſenſible of its own Vileneſs and Impotence to Good, and cries out with the Leper, unclean, unclean! when it ceaſes from its own Will and its own Ways, and from every thing that can be called Self, and is reſigned to the Conduct of God's Holy Spirit, which long ſtrives with it, then Chriſt gives his Grace into the Deſire and Faith of the humble, contrite Soul, and enters into his Temple, doing there the Office of a Refiner's Fire, to purge away its Droſs, and of Fullers Soap, to cleanſe it from the Defilements

ments of Sin, and marries it to Himſelf; thus it becomes Partaker of the Divine Nature; old things paſs away, and all things become new: She is thenceforward the King's Daughter, the Bride of Chriſt, *all glorious within.* SERM. II.

And this may ſerve to explain to us thoſe myſterious Words in the Book of *Canticles*, which the Bride, the Church, ſpeaks of herſelf — *I am black, but comely*; black by Nature, but comely by Grace, loathſome in my ſelf, but lovely thro' my Eſpouſals to the Beloved of my Soul, beautiful in his Beauty, and glorious in his Glory. As no one is truly beautiful but the Believer, ſo no one is ſo ſenſible of his natural Deformity: In himſelf by original Conſtitution he ſees nothing but Ingratitude, Infidelity and Sin; and upon this Account, as well as becauſe of the Remains of indwelling Corruption, he ſaith, *I am black*; but being waſhed, being ſanctified, being made one with Chriſt thro' Faith and Love, by the Spirit of the living God, he can, by virtue of this Union, truly ſay, *I am comely, for my Beloved is mine, and I am his.*

This

This exceeding great Love of Chriſt towards his Church, and the two very different States of Believers by Nature and Grace, is aptly repreſented to us in *Ezek.* ch. xvi. under the Figure of a wretched Infant. The following Paſſages are full of uſeful Doctrine, and will deſerve a particular Attention: "Thou waſt caſt out in the open Field to "the loathing of thy Perſon in the Day that "thou waſt born, and when I paſſed by "thee and ſaw thee polluted in thine own "Blood, I ſaid unto thee, Live: Now when "I paſſed by thee and looked upon thee, "behold thy Time was the Time of Love; "and I ſpread my Skirt over thee, and co-"vered thy Nakedneſs; yea I ſware unto "thee, and entered into a Covenant with "thee, ſaith the Lord God, and thou becam-"eſt mine: Then waſhed I thee with Water; "yea, I thoroughly waſhed away thy Blood "from thee, and I anointed thee with Oyl; "I cloathed thee alſo with broidered Work, "and I girded thee about with fine Linen; "I decked thee alſo with Ornaments, and "put a beautiful Crown upon thine Head, "and thou waſt exceeding beautiful, and "thou didſt proſper into a Kingdom, and thy "Renown went forth among the Heathen

" for thy Beauty, for it was perfect thro' my " Comeliness which I had put upon thee, " saith the Lord God." Such is the Beauty and Dignity of the King's Daughter, the Church which Christ hath purchased with his Blood, and sanctified by his Spirit; not excelling in outward Splendor, as the meretricious Ornaments of Gold and Silver and worldly Grandeur; for in this respect she has generally resembled her blessed Head in the Days of his Flesh, being without any external Form or Comeliness that carnal Minds should seek or desire her; but her adorning is the hidden Man of the Heart in that which is not corruptible; outwardly she has often been, and must be content to be, despised, persecuted, afflicted, for the Kingdom of this World is not her proper Country, being here as a Stranger in a strange Land, but in that divine Life which is hid with Christ in God, the Kingdom of God within us, it is far otherwise with her; here she is in Communion with the Saints, dignified with the Favour of God, and rich in the Graces of his Spirit, and will hereafter be glorified with an exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory — Such is the Dignity and Happiness of all those whom

SERM. II. whom the King of Heaven delighteth to honour.

You ſee here, my Brethren, your high Calling, *viz.* to be a holy Nation, a choſen Generation, a Royal Prieſthood: "walk "worthy therefore of the Vocation where- "with ye are called." And here let me put you in Mind of ſome of the Graces which muſt adorn the Bride of Chriſt, or the believing Soul; for every Member of his Church muſt be glorious within, as well as the collective Body, tho' the Part cannot be ſo compleat as the Whole.

And *firſt*, It is required that ſhe be found faithful. Hath the Saviour given Himſelf for you, that he might redeem you from all Iniquity; and purify you unto Himſelf a peculiar People! Did He ſet his Love upon you when you was altogether unlovely, nay, filthy and defiled? And hath He called you to the high Honour of being his Beloved, his Spouſe? Take heed that you be betrothed unto Him in Faithfulneſs. Should the Son of an earthly King eſpouſe ſome mean Damſel, and ſhe ſhould prove falſe to him, would you not ſay that ſhe deſerved to be ſtoned with Stones till ſhe died? See then that wherein thou judgeſt another thou con-

condemneſt not thyſelf as worthy of ſorer Puniſhment. Haſt thou given in thy Name to Chriſt in the Day of thy Eſpouſals? Behold, thy Maker and thy Redeemer is thine Huſband! and thou haſt ſet thy Seal to thy everlaſting Shame and Condemnation, ſhouldeſt thou prove falſe to thy firſt Love. Thy broken Vows, like an hideous Spectre, will continually haunt and terrify thee; Men and Angels and all the Creatures will witneſs to thy Reproach, and inſtead of the loving Embraces of the heavenly Bridegroom, thou ſhalt find in Him an angry and a jealous God, even a God that is a conſuming fire to all that have dealt treacherouſly againſt Him. Wouldeſt thou then ſay, *My Beloved is mine*, ſee that thou be able to ſay alſo, *and I am his*; His in Duty, His in Faithfulneſs, His in Love? and as thou art eſpouſed to one Huſband, ſee that thou keep clear of all adulterous Loves, and admit not any Rival into Partnerſhip with Him, for He will not accept of divided Affections — He gave his own Heart's Blood for thee, and will have thy whole Heart's Love for Him, "except a Man forſake all that he hath, *ſays Chriſt*, "he cannot be my Diſciple."

Secondly,

Secondly, The Bride of Chriſt muſt be adorned with a meek and humble Spirit, which is in the Sight of God of great Price: And this the heavenly Bridegroom teaches: — "Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly "in Heart, and you ſhall find reſt unto "your Souls." He to whom all Power was given both in Heaven and Earth, could, by a very ſlender Exertion of it, had He been ſo minded, have appeared in all the Pomp and Splendor of earthly Wealth and Grandeur; but He took upon Him the Form of a Servant, and veiled his Majeſty in Meanneſs, to teach us a Leſſon of Humility: Ye covetous and ambitious Spirits, How can ye believe this without being covered with Shame and Reproach! When the Officer ſtruck *Jeſus* with the Palm of his Hand, ſaying, "Anſwereſt thou the High Prieſt "ſo?" Our Lord, meek and patient like the Lamb of God, only replied, "If I have "ſpoken Evil, bear witneſs of the Evil, but "if well, why ſmiteſt thou me?" Say, O ye Sons of Thunder and Lightning, who burſt into Paſſion and flaming Reſentment upon every ſlight Indignity, how will ye be able to juſtify your Behaviour by this Example of the patient Jeſus! Hear Him, after

after this, upon the Croſs, under his expiring Agonies, praying for his Murderers, and declare, O ye malicious and revengeful Hearts, if you can any longer withold your Forgiveneſs from an offending Brother! SERM. II.

The Law did allow a Retaliation for Injuries, an Eye for an Eye, and a Tooth for a Tooth, it being a Miniſtration of Wrath, and Fire its Emblem, for God out of Chriſt is a conſuming Fire againſt all Ungodlineſs and Unrighteouſneſs of Men: But we are not now under the Law, but under Grace, even that better Covenant whoſe Influence is Peace and Love in all its Children, as it requires that we be "kindly affectioned one "towards another, tender hearted, forgiving "one another, even as God for *Chriſt's* ſake hath forgiven us." This meek and amiable Spirit of the Goſpel Diſpenſation is figured in many Places under the Symbol of Water; and Chriſt is ſaid to have come by Water and Blood, to denote by the former the Virtue and Power of his Spirit to cleanſe us from Sin, which is the Fewel of God's Wrath in the Soul of Man: "He that be-"lieveth on Me, ſays our Lord, out of his "Belly ſhall flow Rivers of living Water," ſpeaking of the Spirit in the Hearts of Believers:

lievers: And with this Spiritual, Heavenly Water (of which the outward in the Sacrament is the visible Sign) we must be baptized; of this we must be born again before we can enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. Now when the Gospel Grace of Meekness, as a Stream from the Fountain of Life, flows in upon the Soul, it extinguishes the Fire of Wrathfulness, Impatience and Vengeance in our fallen Nature, calms the Passions, composes the Mind to Devotion, and makes us the Friends both of God and Men. Evermore, Lord, give us this Water, that we thirst not!

Zeal for the Honour of God and his Righteous Laws is a commendable Virtue, and was the distinguishing Characteristick of the Old Testament Worthies; but then let it be remembered, that they were Ministers of a Legal, not Evangelical Righteousness, and were rather the Executioners of God's Vengeance, than the Messengers of his Love to Mankind: And therefore tho' we shall do well to follow their Faith and Patience, yet we must be cautious how we propose to our selves their Zeal for a Pattern under the milder Dispensation of the Gospel, and be particularly careful, that it be guided by Know-

Knowledge, and tempered with Charity. *John* the *Baptiſt* came in the Spirit of *Elijah* and, like his Fore-runner, was auſtere in his Life, ſevere in his Cenſures, and bold to rebuke Sin and Vice: our Lord bears this Teſtimony to him, that "among all that were "born of Women, there had not riſen a "greater than him." And great indeed he was; for he ſtood at the End of the Law and at the Beginning of the Goſpel; was the immediate Harbinger of Chriſt, initiated Him into his Miniſtry; and declared as concerning his own Baptiſm of Repentance, that it was only to prepare the Way, and lead Sinners to Him the great Miniſter of Reconciliation, "The Lamb of God that taketh away the "Sins of the World." But tho' ſuch and ſo great was the Office of this extraordinary Man, yet our Lord pronounces him to be leſs than the leaſt of thoſe who were baptized with his Spirit of Meekneſs and Love. SERM. II.

If then a Zeal for God againſt all Sin and Wickedneſs, tho' kindled at the ſacred Fire of *Sinai's* Mount, comes ſo far ſhort in Bleſſedneſs of that meek and gentle Flame of heavenly Love which warms the Breaſts of *Sion's* Sons and Daughters, what ſhall we

SERM. II. ſay of that unhollowed Zeal kindled up by Rage and Hatred in the Hearts of this World's Children againſt their Brethren, who, becauſe they cannot call down Fire from Heaven to conſume them, are reſolved to fetch it from Hell to work their own Will and malicious Wickedneſs: The Zeal inſpired under the Law, tho' fierce, was holy, and appointed to be the Miniſter of Juſtice and Judgment againſt the Enemies of God; but this is from beneath, and ſpends its Fury againſt his Friends: Surely, the leaſt we can ſay of all ſuch is, "that they know not what "Spirit they are of."

The Glory of Chriſt's Kingdom ſtands not only in Righteouſneſs but in Peace, and accordingly we are told, that in thoſe happy Days of the Church, when true Religion ſhall be eſtabliſhed and exalted in the Earth, there ſhall be no deſtroying in all God's holy Mountain: and where the Kingdom of Chriſt is begun in the Hearts of his Children, this Truth is already exemplified; for there the deſtroying Spirit is caſt out, and all is Love, Joy, Peace; for as the King's Daughter, like the King's Son, is meek and gentle to others, ſo does ſhe enjoy a State of Com-

placency and Serenity within; and indeed if we have not the Peace of God in our Hearts, we can hardly be at Peace with others. This inward Freedom from unruly Paſſions, and all ſuch Perturbations of Mind as hinder our Intercourſe with God in Prayer, and other devout Exerciſes of the Heart, is ſignified to us in what is related concerning the building of the Temple, which was a Type of the Spiritual Church, *viz.* that there was neither Hammer nor Axe, nor any Tool of Iron heard in the Houſe whilſt it was building; figuring thereby, that there muſt be no reſtleſs Agitations of Spirit, no Tumult of diſorderly Appetites in the Soul that draweth nigh unto God, but all muſt be ſtill and quiet within, that it may be the better diſpoſed to liſten to the gentle Whiſpers of his Holy Spirit: To the unconverted and unawakened Sinner, to his diſobedient and rebellious Offspring, God does indeed, for the moſt part, make Himſelf known in a more alarming Way, even as clothed with the Terrors of his Majeſty, but to his Beloved, to the King's Daughter, his Manifeſtation is not in the Fire, nor in the great ſtrong Wind, nor in the Earthquake, but in the ſmall ſtill

SERM. II.

Voice: Nor, on the other hand, are we to think, that we ſhall be the better heard either for our much or loud ſpeaking, for unleſs the ſame Spirit that comforts and bleſſes us, help our Infirmities, and be in our Prayers and Praiſes the Spirit of Supplication and Thankſgiving, the utmoſt Efforts of Nature joined to the moſt ingenious Devices of Art, and tho' we cry aloud from Morning till Evening, will prove but as "ſounding of Braſs or a tinkling Cymbal."

The third Qualification of the King's Daughter that I ſhall take notice of, is Purity of Heart; "Bleſſed are the pure in Heart, "for they ſhall ſee God." By Purity we are not here to underſtand any Perfection in Man by Nature that can commend him to God, for in this reſpect we are all as an unclean thing, and the Heart declared to be "deceitful above all things and deſperately "wicked, and all the Thoughts and Imagi-"nations of it to be evil continually:" But "Chriſt ſo loved his Church that He gave "Himſelf for it, that he might ſanctify and "cleanſe it:" Now it is required of the Soul, thus cleanſed and waſhed from the Pollutions of Sin, that ſhe preſerve her Purity,

Purity, and ſo continue fit for an *Habitation of God thro' the Spirit*; for ſhe is *the Temple of the living God.* Now, *if any Man defile the Temple of God, him ſhall God deſtroy.* And here it is not ſufficient that ſhe keep herſelf unſpotted from the World, and free from the outward Infection of Sin, but alſo from the inward Contagion of it, even from thoſe Luſts and evil Thoughts (as much as poſſible) which war againſt the Soul. SERM. II.

That vain, impure, or other bad Thoughts do involuntarily ariſe in the Minds even of good Men, is a frequent Subject of their Complaint, and that the beſt find this to be the Caſe with them at times will hardly be denied: Where theſe proceed from bad Diſpoſitions and Habits voluntarily contracted, as they are the natural Conſequence of our Sin continued, we cannot be ſuppoſed free from Guilt in this matter, and even otherwiſe, where we delight in or conſent to them, we make them our own, and they take upon them the formal Nature and Eſſence of Sin. There is the more need to obſerve upon this Head, inaſmuch as the Sin of the Thoughts is not ſufficiently attended to by many, who think that they are free from the Guilt of this or that particular

Sin if they are not chargeable with the outward Commiſſion of it, whereas from the Heart proceeds every thing that defileth the Man; that is the Womb in which Sin is conceived; Imagination and Deſire form the Child, and the actual Perpetration is only the Out-birth, tho' it confeſſedly adds aggravated Malignity to the Tranſgreſſion, as our firſt Parents in eating the forbidden Fruit ſet the Seal of Rebellion to the Purpoſe of Diſobedience: And to ſhew that Sin begins before it is brought forth, nay tho' it proceed not to overt Act, we are told in Scripture, that a luſtful Look is a Species of Adultery, and the Hatred of our Brother a kind of Murther. "Cleanſe us, O Lord, "from our ſecret Sins, and enter not into "Judgment with us on their Account, for "how great is the Sum of them! But Thou "art not extreme to mark what is done "amiſs; there is Mercy with Thee, there-"fore ſhalt Thou be feared. [*worſhiped.*]

Now the King's Daughter having her Houſe not only ſwept and garniſhed, but alſo waſhed and cleanſed from every thing that materially defileth, ſhe endeavours to keep it ſo for the Reception of her heavenly Bridegroom, when he vouchſafes her the Honour

of

of his Visits, the gracious Manifestations of his Presence: Bold Intruders may break in upon her, and the unclean Spirit may at times enter the House against her Will, but she gives no Entertainment to such unwelcome Guests, nay, she casts them out with all possible Speed, for having set her Affections on things Above, and her Face towards the heavenly City, her Thoughts naturally tend the same way: And after all we must allow, that, amidst the various Rules laid down for the Government of our Thoughts, the best Course we can take to order them aright is to begin with the Affections, inasmuch as these are the Source from whence they flow; for what a Man loves best he is sure to think most upon. SERM. II.

Another Evidence of Purity of Heart is Simplicity, which takes in what is meant in Scripture by the single Eye and Singleness of Heart, both with respect to God and Man; the contrary to which is rebuked in those Words of St. *James*, "Purify your "Hearts, ye double-minded."

The Hypocrite wears two Faces, and the Men of the World bewilder themselves in the crooked Paths of a serpentine Cunning, and are therefore continually laying Snares

for their Conſciences; whereas the ſimple hearted Chriſtian hath but one Meaning and one Way, and therefore he walketh uprightly; with him is not Yea and Nay: He needeth no Caſuiſtry to his Divinity, to teach him how far he may follow his own Inclinations without ſinning, for his only Inclination is to do the Will of God in all things, and therefore the Purity of his Intention gives Acceptance (thro' the Beloved) to his moſt indifferent Things; and the Spirit of Love, which in him is the Law of the Spirit of Life, flows into a ſpontaneous Obedience to all that God requires of Him. Does any one abound in good Works? it may truly be ſaid of the King's Daughter, that herein ſhe is more abundant, for ſhe adorns the Doctrine of God her Saviour in all things; And therefore as ſhe is *all glorious within*, ſo *her Cloathing is of wrought Gold*—her Soul is cloathed with the Righteouſneſs of Chriſt, as the Garment of her Salvation; and in her outward Life ſhe "lets her Light ſo "ſhine before Men, that they may ſee her "good Works, and glorify her Father "which is in Heaven."

It might here be expected that Mention ſhould be made of thoſe other eminent Chriſtian

tian Graces, Faith, Hope, Charity, as these are the most distinguished Parts of the Divine Life, the most comely and amiable Features in the Beauty of Holiness: But these are Topics of more general Note, and such as have been much insisted on at other times: Let it suffice then to add here, that the King's Daughter is complete in the King's Son, for Christ in her is both the Hope and Earnest of her Glory here, as He will be the Fullness of its Accomplishment hereafter. SERM. II.

Thus doth the Lord, when he He is come into his Temple, *beautify the Place of his Sanctuary*, and *make the Place of his Feet glorious*, for He adorns the faithful Soul with the Graces of his Spirit, even as a Bride is adorned with Jewels: And tho' at times He may prove her with Trials and Crosses, yet it is that she may be approved of by Him; thus all these things work together for her good, and he will assuredly at last *compass her about with Songs of Deliverance*, *give her the Oil of Joy for Mourning*, *and the Garment of Praise for the Spirit of Heaviness.*

Hail, Thou beloved Daughter of the King, all glorious within! Welcome, thrice welcome, to the City of the Lord, the *Zion* of

of the Holy one of *Iſrael*, " Whoſe Walls " are called Salvation, and whoſe Gates " Praiſe! The Sun ſhall be no more thy " Light by Day, neither for Brightneſs ſhall " the Moon give Light unto thee, but the " Lord ſhall be unto thee an everlaſting " Light, and thy God thy Glory."

SER-

SERMON III.

The Faith and Patience of the Saints our Pattern.

HEB. vi. 12.

Be not ſlothful, but Followers of them who through Faith and Patience inherit the Promiſes.

SERMON III.

THE *Jewiſh* Converts are exhorted in the Beginning of this Chapter to a farther Proficiency in the Knowledge of Chriſt and his Religion: "Leaving, (ſays the Apoſtle) the Principles of "the Doctrine of Chriſt, let us go on "unto Perfection." He had before laid the Foundation like a wiſe Maſter-builder, and had grounded them in the Rudiments or initiatory things of Religion, ſuch as Baptiſm, Confirmation, outward Ordinances, and the Belief of a Reſurrection and Judgment to come; and now propoſes to inſtruct them in its more recondite Truths, or

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or the Myſteries of Goſpel Redemption, to open to them the Spirituality of the Law, and to expound its typical, and allegorical Meaning in Reference to Chriſt, who was the Body and Subſtance of all its Shadows: "And this (ſays he) will we do, if God "permit."

The Religion of Chriſt has an Inſide as well as an Outſide, and is a Diſpenſation both of Light and Grace, his Spirit making manifeſt, as we are able to receive its Light, not only the Figures and Prophecies under the Law, but alſo the deep things of God, even the Wiſdom of God in a Myſtery; and therefore we are exhorted to grow, not only in Grace, but alſo in the Knowledge of our Lord and Saviour *Jeſus Chriſt*. In both theſe reſpects the Goſpel ſtands differenced from the Law; and of this the Tabernacle of Old was a Figure, being divided into two Parts by a Veil, into the innermoſt of which the High Prieſt only entered: But this Veil was taken away by Chriſt, and every Chriſtian has free Acceſs, thro' Him, into the Holy of Holies: We muſt paſs thro' the outward Tabernacle where is the Candleſtick and the Table, and the Shew-Bread, into the inward, where

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is the Golden Cenſer, the Ark of the Covenant, and the Cherubims of Glory ſhadowing the Mercy Seat, *i. e.* We muſt take Sacraments and Inſtitutions only in our Way to *Chriſt*, without reſting in them; direct our View thro' the Glaſs of Ordinances to his Merits, Interceſſion, and Propitiation, and by Faith preſs thro' the outward viſible Sign to the inward and ſpiritual Grace, that our Souls may be nouriſhed thereby, till we grow up unto perfect Men, unto the Meaſure of the Stature of the Fullneſs of Chriſt.

But alas! How many amongſt us content themſelves with being Children both in Knowledge and Grace all their Life long! ſeek to know little more of their Religion than what they formerly learned in their Catechiſm, and if to the repeating of their Creed and Confeſſion, and to their joining in the outward Ordinance, they add a decent Performance of the other Parts of external Worſhip, think that they have done God good Service; but this is ſticking in the firſt Principles or Rudiments of the Doctrine of Chriſt, and not going on unto Perfection: Nay ſome go farther, and yet come far ſhort of the Mark, even ſuch as have attained to much

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Knowledge in the written Word, can talk wiſely about Doctrines, argue learnedly from the Law and the Teſtimony, can diſtinguiſh betwixt Covenant and Covenant, and comment critically upon the great Points of Faith, Grace, and Juſtification; but their Knowledge is all ſcientifical, it is received from the Letter only, and therefore paſſes no farther than the Head, their Law is outward, and not the Law of the Spirit of Life, and their Teſtimony is outward, not the living Witneſs in themſelves, and therefore they are only wiſe *about*, but not *unto* Salvation; for tho' the natural Man may form much ideal Knowledge in his Mind from the Words of Scripture, yet "the "things of the Spirit of God he receiveth "not, neither can he know them, becauſe "they are ſpiritually diſcerned." Beſides, the Wiſdom which is from Above, being always tempered with Humility and Divine Love, is pure and peaceable; whereas that which is from Beneath, (from the earthly Part in Man, and therefore called Fleſhly Wiſdom) however it be exerciſed on Divine Subjects, leaves the Heart in as bad a State at it found it; nay, rather feedeth its Corruptions, by puffing up with Pride

Pride and begetting a Contempt of others; it is the very Ground of Strife and Debate, the Parent of bigoted and furious Zeal, and has been the Cauſe of much Perſecution in all Ages of the Church.

True Religion then, in the Power and right Knowledge of it, lies deeper than Ordinances or Doctrines, it reaches to the inner Parts, or rather ſprings up there, even in the hidden Man of the Heart, where Chriſt bruiſes the Serpent, erects his Throne, and conſecrates us Temples of the living God: Here the true Worſhipers worſhip the Father in Spirit and in Truth: The Apoſtle, therefore, who well knew Man's natural Propenſity to Knowledge, and both the Unprofitableneſs and Danger of it where the Heart is not ſanctified by Grace, ſtirs up his Converts to Diligence in their high Calling, that they might be practical as well as knowing Chriſtians, and exhorts them to Faith and Patience, thoſe eminent Graces of the Divine Life, which fit us both for doing and ſuffering the Will of God, adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour in all things, and enable us to prove victorious in our Spiritual Warfare: *Be not ſlothful, but Followers of them*

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them who through Faith and Patience inherit the Promises.

The Text is full of useful Matter, as well as of universal Extent, for it is applicable to every Person and every State of the Christian Life: The Slothful may here be shamed into Action, and the Diligent spurred on to quicken their Speed; the Faint-hearted are encouraged by the Example of those who have fought the good Fight, and now inherit the Promises, and we are all here instructed how we may follow them to that Blessedness which they enjoy, *viz.* by Faith and Patience.

I shall speak to each of these Particulars in my way, and then conclude with a Word of Application.

And first for a Word to such as are slothful in the full Extent and Meaning of the Word, who have stood all the Day idle, and have not yet so much as set about the Work they came into the World for, and which they ought by this Time to have well nigh finished: Now to such of you, my Brethren, if any such be here, I am almost at a loss how to address myself, or by what Name to call you: Shall I call you Christians? that cannot be; for a slothful Christian

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is a Contradiction in Terms: Or ſhall I call you rational Creatures? neither will that Name fit you with more Propriety, unleſs it may be deemed rational to live in a total Neglect of your only true Intereſt, without making any Proviſion for the well-being of your immortal Souls, which, for what you know, may this Night be required of you.

Every Part even of inanimate Nature may ſerve to reproach the Inactivity of the ſlothful Perſon; the Planets and heavenly Bodies are in Motion to finiſh their deſtined Courſe; the Elements are at work carrying on the Deſigns of the Almighty in the Wonders of his Providence; and the Vegetable World no leſs diſplays his Wiſdom, Power, and Goodneſs; nay the whole Creation travelleth in Pain till it be delivered from that Bondage of Vanity, Diſorder, and Corruption into which the Curſe of Sin hath caſt it; for there ſhall be a Redemption in Nature as well as in the Souls of all juſt Men, even at that time when there ſh all be new Heavens and a new Earth.

Say, now, ye Sons and Daughters of Sloth, how will you appear when you are judged? and what Anſwer will you make to your Lord, when he calleth upon you to give

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an Account of your Stewardſhip? The Heavens and the Earth declare the Glory of God and ſhew forth his Praiſe; every Meteor and every Creature, Snow and Vapour, Wind and Storm fulfil his Word and Will, whilſt you, whom He hath endowed with ſuch exalted Faculties and Powers, do Him no Service, and bring Him no Praiſe.

The Perſons here ſpoken to are not ſo charged with Slothfulneſs as if they ſat ſtill and did nothing, this is not the Meaning of the Charge, for you may be as active and induſtrious in your temporal Affairs, as buſy in your Shops or Farms, or as intent upon the Management and Improvement of your Eſtates, and more ſo, than the beſt of your Neighbours, riſing up early, late taking Reſt, and eating the Bread of Carefulneſs; you may thrive and proſper in the World, provide Things honeſt in the Sight of Men both for yourſelves and Families, enjoy the good Things of this Life with Decency and Reputation, and leave the reſt of your Subſtance for your Babes; and in all theſe things your Maxims and worldly Prudence will meet with Applauſe, and Poſterity will praiſe both your Sayings and your Doings, and will go and do likewiſe: But for all this you

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may be as ſlothful, in the Senſe of the Text, as *Solomon's* Sluggard, who will not plow by Reaſon of the Cold; for it is Spiritual Sloth that is here ſpoken of, which is by far the moſt fatal kind of it, even that by which the Soul is left deſtitute of all Spiritual Cultivation and Nouriſhment, unprovided with every ſaving Grace, and conſequently void of its true Intereſt in Chriſt: If Diligence be wanting here, it is but loſt Labour in every other Inſtance, "For what will it profit a "Man if he gain the whole World and loſe "his own Soul?" That which is of the Earth is earthy; if we ſow to the Fleſh we ſhall of the Fleſh reap only Corruption; if our Motives and Labours are of a temporal Nature, the Reward and Fruit of them muſt be ſo too, and periſh with Time, for what a Man ſoweth, that only ſhall he reap; but if we ſow to the Spirit, we ſhall of the Spirit reap Life everlaſting: If we are led by the Love of God to chuſe and ſeek the things of God, to be renewed in the Spirit of our Mind, to be conformed to the Image of his Son, and to glorify Him on Earth; then, as our Work is ſpiritual, ſo will our Wages be alſo; and when the Shadows of earthly things are paſſed away as a Dream, and the

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Subſtance of things hoped for is come, we ſhall riſe to ſubſtantial Bliſs and immortal Glory.

And now let me perſuade you, O ye Children of Sloth, and would to God that I could perſuade you! to conſider in this your day the things which belong unto your Peace, to conſider wherefore you were ſent into the World, what you are, and whither you are going: Open your Eyes, if but for a moment, and behold your Danger, for you are as one walking blindfold on the Brink of a Precipice, where one falſe Step will tumble you headlong into Deſtruction; or, like unto him that ſleepeth on the Top of a Maſt, whom the next irregular Motion of the ſtaggering Ship will toſs into the great Deep, from whence there is no emerging: O for the Voice of an Angel to call out to you in more than the Loudneſs of Thunder; "Awake thou that ſleepeſt and ariſe from the "Dead, that Chriſt may give thee Light!"

But, *Secondly*, There are others who take ſome Thought about Soul-concerns, and are at ſome Pains for Salvation in outward things, and yet on account of their Slackneſs in the Spiritual Life, may find a Reproof in the Charge of the Text; and it is to be feared

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ed that every one of us, more or leſs, comes in for a Share in the ſame: Let us inſtance in a Character not very uncommon in the World, and ſuch as meets with high Commendation from it, and yet ſo defective in the Eſſentials of true Chriſtianity, that we muſt pronounce it far ſhort of the Goſpel Standard.

Come then, ſuch a one as I am here ſpeaking of, and let us reaſon together: Thou ſayeſt that thou art a Chriſtian, and in Evidence of it, frequenteſt the Church and Sacrament; thou profaneſt not the Lord's Day, nor his Holy Name on any other Day; thou art neither a Drunkard, Whoremonger, nor Extortioner, thou art true and juſt in all thy Dealings, haſt Morning and Evening Prayer in thy Family, ſometimes readeſt a good Book, and occaſionally giveſt ſomething to the Poor — Thus far thou doſt well, and more than Thouſands; and for none of theſe things ſhalt thou be reproved: But if this be the whole of thy Religion, thou haſt got to the End of thy Line before thou haſt half learned the Chriſtian Catechiſm: Thy Religion, O Man, is chiefly negative, or, if thou haſt taken in ſome of the outward Duties, thou

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haſt left out all the inward Graces of it. Behold! here is not a Word of Faith, Hope, and that Charity which is the Love of God and Man; not a Word of thy being a Sinner, nor of the Way of thy Recovery: Thou ſayeſt thou doſt ſo and ſo; but doſt thou hope to be juſtified by thy Doings? Know of a Truth, that if thou ſetteſt up thyſelf for thy Saviour, Chriſt will profit thee nothing. Haſt thou not ſeen that thou art by Nature a Child of Wrath, born into the World under the Curſe of Sin, and that unleſs thou be born again thou canſt not enter into the Kindom of Heaven? Haſt thou not ſeen the Pride and Naughtineſs of thy Heart, and its Enmity to God in thy unrenewed State, teaching thee that Evil is in thy beſt Actions, and that thy very Duties ſtand in need of being repented of, and conſequently that, being by Nature a wild Olive, thou muſt be graffed into Chriſt the true Olive by Faith before thou canſt bring forth good Fruit? And haſt thou not ſeen, and doſt thou not know that thou art become a fallen Spirit, and muſt therefore be quickened again to Newneſs of Life by the Holy Ghoſt? that all that Sin hath done in thee muſt be undone, thy falſe Confidence and Sufficiency in

in thyſelf ſlain, thy Luſts mortified, and the World crucified to thee and thou unto the World, that ſo Chriſt, who is the Power of God, may be exalted above every Creature, and live, and dwell and reign in thee; if thou haſt not ſeen all this; and if the Sight thereof has not led thee in Repentance and Self-abaſement to the Lord *Jeſus* as thy only Saviour, however thou mayſt ſay, I am rich, and increaſed with Goods, and have need of nothing, yet thou art in very deed poor, and miſerable, and blind, and naked.

Again — Thou calleſt thy ſelf a Chriſtian; if ſo, thou art a Warrior, for thou haſt engaged to fight under Chriſt's Banner againſt the World, the Fleſh and the Devil: But doſt thou fight ſucceſsfully, or only as one that beateth the Air? Is thine Armour of a heavenly Temper, ſuch as the Shield of Faith, the Breaſt-plate of Righteouſneſs, and the Sword of the Spirit; or, are the Weapons of thy Warfare only carnal, ſuch as human Prudence, conſtitutional Courage, and thy natural Reaſon? Look well to it! for the *Philiſtines* are upon thee, and will ſoon prove what Metal both Thou and thy Weapons are made of.

Once more: Doſt thou ſtrive lawfully,

that is, according to the Law of Arms and the Rules of Diſcipline to be obſerved in the Chriſtian Warfare? Doſt thou keep under thy Body and bring it into Subjection, and by the Grace given thee fight manfully againſt thoſe worſt of Enemies the Corruptions of thy Nature and the Sins that moſt eaſily beſet thee, that having ſubdued the Foes that are of thine own Houſe, thou mayſt the more ſafely engage thoſe that are without? Doſt thou, upon gaining any Advantage over thine Enemy, ſit ſtill in Repoſe and fancied Security, or keep a watchful Eye both on the Right Hand and on the Left to guard againſt a Surprize? For know, O Chriſtian, that there is no Time of laying down of Arms for thee here, and that if thine Enemy ſlacken his Efforts or withdraw his Forces, 'tis only a Feint, that he may attack thee to more advantage at ſome unguarded Hour: For we are not ignorant of his Devices.

Laſtly, Doſt thou reſolve, the Lord being thy Helper, to perſevere unto the End, under whatever Difficulties or Diſadvantages may happen, and tho' thou ſometimes loſeſt Ground, and the Adverſary chance to get the upper Hand, canſt thou ſay

ſay with a full Confidence in the Lord thy Strength — Rejoice not againſt me, O mine Enemy; "when I fall I ſhall riſe again, "when I ſit in Darkneſs the Lord will be a "Light unto me? If thou canſt anſwer to theſe Queſtions aright, happy art thou, for thou art a faithful Soldier and beloved Servant of thy Lord, and ſhalt go on conquering and to conquer till thou haſt trodden down all thine Enemies under thy Feet. But how few of us, my dear Brethren, can ſay thus much! How do we entangle ourſelves with the Affairs of this Life, and, inſtead of laying aſide every Weight that may hinder us in the Chriſtian Race, go on to load ourſelves with the Cares and Incumbrances of the World, ſo that we move at beſt but heavily and ſlowly. How many *Martha's* are there in this Congregation, who mind the Buſineſs of the Kitchen more than the one thing needful! How many *Demas's* who thro' Love of this preſent World have left their firſt Love for Chriſt, his Ways, and his People! How many, like *Dives*, are intent only upon enjoying their Temporal good things! And how many prodigal Sons and Daughters who ſpend all their Time and Subſtance

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in Pleaſure and riotous Living! ſo do the Profits or Diverſions, the Vanities and Follies of the World run away with us, and leave us neither Leiſure nor Inclination for Seriouſneſs: Nay, among the beſt of us, how much Reaſon is there for Complaint! What Backwardneſs in Religious Duties! What Dulneſs and Dryneſs in the Performance of them! How little Devotion in our Cloſets! How little of Godlineſs in our Converſation! How unmortified in our Lives! How unſpiritualized in our Affections! Inſomuch that I fear, that the Precept in the Text comes home rather as a Word of Reprehenſion than Caution to every one of us.

But if the former Part of the Text carries in it a Rebuke to the Lazy and the Loiterer, the latter Part of it holds forth Encouragement to the Faint-hearted — *Be Followers of them who thro' Faith and Patience inherit the Promiſes.* We are here not only told our Duty, but, to animate us in the Diſcharge of it, have propoſed to our Imitation the Examples of thoſe who have gone before us in the Way, have fought the good Fight, and finiſhed their Courſe, and are now in Poſſeſſion of that Crown of Life which is laid up for all that

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endure unto the End. And of theſe we have an illuſtrious Liſt upon Record of undoubted Authority, as the venerable Line of the Patriarchs, the goodly Fellowſhip of the Prophets, the glorious Company of the Apoſtles, and the noble Army of Martyrs and Confeſſors, beſides numberleſs other now glorified Saints in all Ages of the Church, who are ſo many burning and ſhining Lights to kindle us into Zeal, and guide our Feet in the Way to Heaven. Take then for your Patterns theſe Hearts of Gold purified Seven Times, theſe Sons of the Morning, theſe glittering Stars of Light, and, fired by their Examples, preſs on to Victory and Glory: Say not within yourſelves, their Virtues are inimitable by us, ſuch Perfection is too high for us, we cannot attain unto it; for they were Fleſh and Blood as we are, Men of like Paſſions with ourſelves; and both their Failings and Falls are recorded, not only for our Caution, but alſo for our Encouragement not to deſpair, and ſhew us how weak they were by Nature, tho' ſo ſtrong by Grace, that the Excellency of the Power may appear to be, not of Man, but of God. We praiſe God in our Prayer for the

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the Church militant, for all his Saints and Servants departed this Life in his Faith and Fear: but let us not mock God by praiſing Him for that which we deſign to be no better for, ſeeing their Lives and their Deaths were written for our Imitation, that we together with them might be made Partakers of the Promiſes. Having then ſo great and bright a Cloud of Witneſſes, let us enter upon our Warfare with Alacrity and Emulation, and that the rather, foraſmuch as no one Encouragement that our Hearts can wiſh for is wanting to animate us in it; we have Men and Angels for our Spectators, Saints for our Examples, Chriſt for our Captain, and, in caſe of Victory, Heaven for our Inheritance.

But as we are directed to follow thoſe who now inherit the Promiſes, ſo muſt we follow them in the ſame way they went, *viz.* thro' Faith and Patience.

What great and glorious Things do we read of Faith in the Scriptures as exemplified in the Lives of the ancient Worthies, for which in particular I refer you to the xi^th^ Chapter of this Epiſtle; whence we may learn, that Faith in Chriſt is not a Grace peculiar to the Goſpel Diſpenſation, for

for He always was, is, and will be the Light of the World manifeſting itſelf to all that are receptive of Him, tho' in different Degrees, and according to different Miniſtrations. *Enoch* and *Noah* before the Flood knew *Chriſt*, and preached from his Spirit; *Abraham* ſaw his Day and was glad; the whole Law was a figurative Exhibition of Him; the Prophets repreſented Him more diſtinctly; but we have ſeen Him in a ſtill clearer Diſplay of our Salvation as the only Begotten of the Father full of Grace and Truth. It is Faith in this Saviour that diſtinguiſhes us from thoſe that ſit in Darkneſs and the Shadow of Death; 'tis thro' Faith in his Redeeming Blood that our Juſtification is evidenced to us; by the Power of this Faith all the Chriſtian Heroes of old Time were enabled to contend for the Truth ſo valiantly; and by the ſame we and all that follow us may go and do likewiſe. Courage then, O Chriſtian! and let not thy Heart faint within thee: Art thou toſſed in a troubled and tempeſtuous Ocean where the Billows of Adverſity and Affliction daſh againſt thee, and the Floods of Ungodlineſs make thee afraid? Have Faith, and like *Noah's* Ark thou

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ſhalt ride ſecurely on the Top of the Waters. Do Difficulties and Diſcouragements, like Lions in the Way, oppoſe thy Paſſage to the City of God, or does the Flame of Perſecution threaten thee? Take Heart, and follow thoſe who by Faith ſtopped the Mouths of Lions, and quenched the Violence of the Fire. Nothing is too hard for Chriſtian Faith; "all things, ſays our Lord, "are poſſible to him that believeth:" Nay, if thou haſt a right Faith Chriſt is thine, and in Him all Things, Life and Death, Things preſent and Things to come; behold, they will all work together for thy good, and thou ſhalt at laſt aſſuredly receive the End of thy Faith, even the Salvation of thy Soul.

But then, in the next Place, remember that to Faith thou add Patience, for tho' Faith, in a vigorous Exertion of its full Power, be a kind of Chriſtian Omnipotence, yet, that thou mayeſt know it to be a Gift and not a Child of thine own, the Lord is pleaſed at times to with-hold the precious Fruits and Comforts of it, tho' the Root remaineth in thee: at ſuch Seaſons thou mayſt go forth like *Sampſon* to ſhake thyſelf and rouſe up thy Powers, but thou wilt find thy Strength departed, and that

that thou art to all Appearance weak as another Man; but be not dismayed, for the Lord has not left thee; He has only withdrawn the Evidence of one Grace to afford occasion for the Exercise of another; He suffers thy Faith to disappear, that Patience may have her perfect Work in thee.

The Christian Life is not a State of uninterrupted Comfort, as some describe it, herein speaking from their System, and not from any Experience of their own. It is not the Way of God's Dealings with us, nor is it meet for us, that we should always walk on our High Places, and feed on the Mountains of Exaltation, but descend at Times into the Valley beneath for our Trial and Humiliation: It was here that the Son of God walked when He sweat as it were great Drops of Blood: Here it was that He drank off the Bitter Cup of his Passion: And here we must follow Him thro' Death to Life eternal; "For it be-"came Him for whom are all Things, "and by whom are all Things, in bring-"ing many Sons unto Glory, to make the "Captain of their Salvation perfect thro' "Sufferings: For both He that sanctifieth "and they who are sanctified are all of "one;

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" one; for which Cauſe He is not aſhamed " to call them Brethren." Thus then if we mean to be Partakers of Chriſt's Holineſs, we muſt alſo be Partakers of his Sufferings; and if we ſuffer with Him patiently we ſhall reign with Him eternally.

Here then we ſee our need of Patience, as before we ſaw our need of Faith: And God be praiſed, that He hath provided Virtues and Graces ſuited to every State and Stage, every Time and Exigency of the Chriſtian Life. What tho' the Day of Rejoicing ſeem to be over with ſome of us, or perhaps not yet begun, and Sorrow be nigh at hand; tho' no Voice of Joy be heard in our Dwellings, but our Abode be called *Bochim*, or a Place of Mourners; yet O Chriſtians, ſorrow not as Men without Hope, but in Patience poſſeſs ye your Souls: You ſit at the Foot of the Croſs weeping; look up to Him who hanged on it with the Deſire of your Souls, and put your Truſt in the Lord, even the Lord *Jeſus*, for your Groanings are not hid from Him; He will put your Tears into his Bottle, and your Sorrows ſhall be noted in his Book: If He delay for a while his gracious Viſits, yet wait for Him,

Him, He will not tarry long, He will not leave you comfortleſs, He will come to you. Look at the Generations of Old, and ſee! Did ever any truſt in the Lord and was confounded! Or did any abide in his Fear and was forſaken! Or whom did He ever deſpiſe that called upon Him! Conſider well, therefore, the Patience of the Saints, and be not ſlack "to follow them "who thro' Faith and Patience inherit the "Promiſes."

And now having laid before you a ſhort Sketch of the Chriſtian Warfare, with ſome ſuitable Motives for your Encouragement in it, ſuffer me to conclude with a Word of Exhortation to you all, to uſe your utmoſt Diligence to make your Calling and Election ſure.

Conſider, my dear Brethren, that your Work is great, and the Time for doing it both ſhort and uncertain: What Proficiency you have already made in it God and your Conſciences know beſt; this however I am ſure of, that none have any Time to loſe, but ought to redeem every Day and Hour of it. If the great Buſineſs is yet to begin in any of you, and the very Foundation of Repentance from Dead

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Works, and of Faith towards God yet unlaid in your Souls, make no longer tarrying to turn unto the Lord, and put not off from Day to Day, for who knows whether the Mercy of another Day will be granted you or not? Who knows but the Son of God is now preparing his Throne for Judgment? that the Angel, to whom the Office of ſummoning the Quick and Dead before Him is aſſigned, has already received his Command to blow the tremendous Blaſt, and that other Angel ſpoken of in the *Revelations*, to take his Stand upon the Sea, and upon the Earth, and to ſwear by Him that liveth for ever and ever that Time ſhall be no more? We cannot be ſure that this is not the caſe, and therefore what Madneſs is it to riſque eternal Salvation upon a Chance which we know not how ſoon may fail us! This, however, is certain, that Death cannot be far from any one, and will probably ſurprize ſome of us very ſoon, and as there is no Repentance or Work in the Grave whither we are going, it behoves us as much to prepare againſt the Hour of Death as for the Day of Judgment. You cannot ſay, that you want Inſtruction in Godlineſs, for you have Line upon Line and Precept

cept upon Precept: You cannot ſay, that you want Calls to Repentance; for God the Father calleth you by Providences, by Mercies, by Judgments; God the Son calleth you by all that He hath done and ſuffered for you, by his Word, by his Ordinances, by his Miniſters; and God the Holy Ghoſt calleth you by the ſecret Whiſpers and Strivings of his Spirit, and by the Checks and Admonitions of your own Conſciences: Who then is that faithful and wiſe Servant who knoweth his Lord's Will, and prepareth himſelf to do thereafter? Bleſſed is that Servant, yea thrice bleſſed ſhall he be in that Day when the Lord maketh up his Jewels, for he ſhall ſhine as the Sun in the Kingdom of his Father for ever and ever.

Ariſe now, O ye ſlothful ones, from your Bed of Slumber, before your Eyes are cloſed in eternal Death. Be wiſe, O ye fooliſh Virgins, and provide Oyl for your Lamps before the Door of Mercy be ſhut againſt you: And tho' it be the Eleventh Hour with many of you, and ye have ſtood thus long idle, the Day is not yet quite ſpent — You may ſtill enter into the Vineyard, and receive every one a Penny: And tho' your

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Hearts be burthened with Sorrow on Account of your paſt Negligence and Slothfulneſs, and becauſe of the many gracious Opportunities you have ſuffered to paſs by unimproved, nevertheleſs it is not yet too late; only attend to the Voice of your forgiving loving Lord, who willeth not the Death of any Sinner, for He calls and invites you, ſaying — "Come unto me all "ye that labour and are heavy laden, and "I will give you Reſt." And may the Power of Chriſt go along with his Call, as it did when he called *Simon* and *Andrew* his Brother, and compel you by a gracious Violence to forſake your Nets, even all your worldly Entanglements, and to follow Him likewiſe. And now, my Brethren, quit yourſelves like Men, and be ſtrong in the Lord, for the Kingdom of Heaven ſuffereth Violence, and the Violent take it by Force: And may the Work of the Lord proſper in your Hands and in your Hearts, to the Glory of God and the Salvation of your immortal Souls! Even ſo grant Lord Jeſus! Amen.

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Christ our only Safety in Spiritual Conflicts.

MATTH. xiv. 24.

But the Ship was now in the midst of the Sea, tossed with Waves; for the Wind was contrary.

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AFTER our Lord had miraculously fed a great Multitude of People, He commanded his Disciples to get into a Ship and to pass over to the other Side of the Sea of *Tiberias* whilst He sent the Multitude away, which having done He went up into a Mountain apart to pray.

Tho' it was one Part of our Blessed Lord's Character, after He entered upon his Ministry, that He went about doing good both to the Bodies and Souls of Men, yet we often read of his Retirements for Prayer, teaching us hereby, that however publick our Character may be in Life, how much

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ſoever it may be our Duty to labour and exert ourſelves for the Benefit of others, yet this will not excuſe our Neglect of private Devotion: We muſt frequently ſequeſter ourſelves from the Crowd, and from the Diſtractions of all external Occupations, to hold an holy Intercourſe with God the Father of our Spirits, and to elevate our Thoughts to Heavenly Things.

Outward Duties have a conſiderable Place in Religion, foraſmuch as we ſtand related to thoſe that are about us in various Connexions which call upon us for frequent Expreſſions of our Charity in mutual good Offices towards our Brethren; but the Divine Life conſiſts chiefly in the Exerciſe of inward Graces and devout Affections, bringing us into Communion with God, and ſo deriving from Him the Supports and Conſolations of his Spirit: And in theſe Actings of Divine Faith, Reſignation and Love it was, that our Lord's Humanity was enabled to overcome in his Temptation in the Wilderneſs, ſtrengthened under his Agony in the Garden, transfigured on the Mount, and nouriſhed with Meat that his Diſciples knew not of, even the Communications of his own Divine Nature. Were we thus accuſtomed to withdraw,

withdraw, at Times, after the Example of our Lord, from every buſy Scene of Life and all Commerce with the World, to feaſt our Souls with Spiritual Entertainment, we ſhould aſſuredly find the Work of God to go on more ſucceſsfully in our Hearts, and that ſuch religious Abſtractions would prove not only refreſhing Cordials to our Spirits on our weariſome Journey thro' this Vale of Miſery, but alſo greatly helpful in fitting us for the active Duties of our Station: But to proceed.

It happened during this Receſs of our Lord, that the Diſciples were in great Jeopardy in a Storm, the Ship being now in the Midſt of the Sea toſſed with the Waves, for the Wind was contrary; and in the fourth Watch of the Night *Jeſus* went unto them walking on the Sea. Whether our Lord foreſeeing the Tempeſt ordered them out to Sea; or whether He, at whoſe Word the ſtormy Wind ariſeth, appointed it for the Tryal of their Faith and to ſhew forth his Power in their wonderful Deliverance, is not material for us to know; ſure it is, that it happened not without wiſe Deſign; for if even a Sparrow falleth not to the Ground without his Knowledge, much more

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doth He concern himself in all that befalleth his Children. The Disciples then were to be brought into Danger and Distress that they might have a fresh Proof of their Lord's Divinity and tender Care of them, and that by such repeated Pledges of his Power and Goodness, their Infidelity might be overcome, and their Hearts melted into Love and Gratitude towards their Divine Master and Benefactor: So patient is our Lord towards us, condescending, in Compassion to our Infirmities, to manifest his Love to us at sundry Times and in divers Manners, if by any means He may conquer the Reluctance and Stubbornes of our Nature, and gain himself the Victory over our unbelieving Hearts. One would think, indeed, that the Disciples stood in little need of any fresh Proof of our Lord's Divine Power for the Confirmation of their Faith after so recent a Demonstration of it as that of his feeding Five thousand Men, besides Women and Children, with only Five Loaves and two small Fishes; but St. *Mark*, who also relates this Circumstance of the Storm, tells us, that when the Wind ceased upon our Saviour's entering into the Ship, *they were sore amazed and wondered*; *for*, says he, *they considered not the Miracle*

of

of the Loaves, for their Heart was hardened. SERMON IV.

And here we are naturally led to obſerve upon that kind of Faith which conſiſts in a bare Aſſent of the Underſtanding ariſing from External Evidence only: This confeſſedly has its uſe when well applied, but how inſufficient this is of itſelf alone to any good Purpoſes of the Divine Life, we may learn from this Inſtance of the Diſciples during their unenlightened, unconverted State, whoſe Faith (tho' they were Eye-witneſſes to ſo many mighty Works done by our Lord) ſeldom laſted from one Miracle to the next. It is ſaid in the ſecond Chapter of St. *John*, that many believed on "*Jeſus* when they ſaw his Miracles; but "that He did not commit himſelf unto "them, becauſe he knew all Men;" giving us hereby to underſtand, that altho' they owned his Character and Miſſion, yet theirs was not a true Faith, but they were probably ſuch as thro' the Hopes of Favour or the Fear of Perſecution would have betrayed Him. Hence we are taught, that there is a believing in Chriſt with a human Faith which we may be no better for, as far forth as it brings us no nearer to Him, nor Him to us as the Saviour of our Souls: This

muſt be the Office of that Divine Faith which is wrought in us by the Spirit of Grace, and wherewith the Heart believeth unto Righteouſneſs, even that operative holy Principle which the Apoſtle ſpeaks of where he ſaith; "the Life which I now live, I live "by the Faith of the Son of God:" The former kind of Faith carnal Me often ha ve, and yet both live and dye in their Sins; the latter is that which purifieth the Heart from Sin, and under the Influence of which we believe to the ſaving of the Soul: With the one we call *Jeſus* Lord by the Holy Ghoſt, and ſo with the Mouth make Confeſſion to Salvation; by the other the Devils could cry out, "Thou art the Son of God," — for they knew that He was the Chriſt. Much Streſs is laid by the Generality on the Evidence of Miracles, as if that were the beſt and ſureſt Foundation of the Chriſtian Faith, for outward Chriſtians only build on outward Evidence; but where the Heart is ſhut againſt the Grace of Faith, and the inward Demonſtration of the Spirit and Power of Truth; to ſuch the raiſing of the Dead to Life (however it might furniſh Matter for Curioſity or Admiration) would be ineffectual to the producing any beneficial

ficial Faith in the Heart. This Obſervation is not founded on Opinion, but Fact; for the *Jewiſh* Rulers knew of our Lord's raiſing not only *Lazarus* but alſo himſelf from the Dead, and yet did all they could to ſuppreſs the Belief and Effect of theſe Miracles: And for this Cauſe probably it was, that our Saviour who wrought many Miracles, to the End that no Credentials might be wanting to his Miſſion and Miniſtry, but that every Mouth might be ſtopped and all Infidelity remain without Excuſe, yet refuſed to ſatisfy the Expectation of the *Phariſees* and of *Herod* on that Point, as likewiſe the Demand of thoſe who required his coming down from the Croſs, that they might believe. Thus does our Heavenly Father reveal to Babes, to the Humble and Simple, what He conceals from the Wiſe and Prudent of this World. —But to return to the Diſciples in their Diſtreſs.

It is ſaid in the ſecond Verſe after the Text, that when the Diſciples ſaw the Lord walking on the Sea, they were troubled, ſaying, *It is a Spirit, and they cried out for Fear.* How natural is it for People under any great Calamity to terrify themſelves

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selves with the Workings of their own disturbed Imaginations? and that the Disciples were at this Time in such Circumstances as are apt to cause Perturbation of Mind we must readily allow, according to that just and elegant Description given by the Psalmist of Persons at Sea in a Storm: "They "are carried up to the Heaven and down "again to the Deep; their Soul melteth "away because of the Trouble; they reel "to fro, and stagger like a drunken Man, "and are at their Wits End." But allowing them to be so far Masters of themselves as to preserve their Minds free from Disorder and all Delusions of Fancy upon this Occasion, yet even so we must grant it to be no unreasonable Conclusion, that the Form of a Man seen walking upon the Waters could be no other than a Spirit; for what Body of Flesh and Blood was ever known to do so before? Who but he that created the Elements could suspend or alter the Properties and Laws of their Nature, and walk upon the Sea as upon dry Ground? But tho' we apologize for their Mistake, yet how shall we allow for their Fear because of an Apparition? For what is there so terrifying in the Sight of a Spirit? since those

Beings

Beings are ſubject to the Command and Controul of Him who is the God of all Spirits as much as of his other Creatures: If they are good Spirits, they can have no Inclination to hurt us, but come on a friendly Errand for our Inſtruction, Direction, or Comfort; "For are they not all miniſtring "Spirits ſent to miniſter unto them that "ſhall be Heirs of Salvation?" But if, on the other hand, they be of an evil Nature, and Enemies to Men, yet even ſo, they are ſubject to the Laws of their Kingdom, and the Almighty hath ſet them Bounds which they cannot paſs; and therefore we have nothing more to fear from Spirits than from Men or any other Creatures, which may ſerve equally by Commiſſion and Appointment from God as Inſtruments of Good or Evil to us: But the Truth of the Matter lies here: The Diſciples were at this Time frail and weak like other Men, who are more led by their Paſſions than ſound Judgment: Add to this, that they were brought into ſeeming great Peril of Death, ſeparated from their dear Lord and only Friend, in the Midſt of the Sea in a tempeſtuous Night, the Ship toſſed with the Waves and the Wind contrary, and thus ſurrounded with

with the Horrors of the Deep thinking that they ſaw a Spectre riſen from beneath to pronounce their Doom and bid them to prepare for their watry Grave: Such and ſo great was their Diſtreſs when *Jeſus* ſpake unto them and ſaid; *Be of good cheer, it is I, be not afraid:* And when He came into the Ship the Wind ceaſed, and they worſhiped Him.

We may obſerve here the Lord's graci- our Dealings towards his Children in the greateſt ſeeming Severity of his Diſpenſations, and how in the midſt of Judgment He thinketh upon Mercy: Were the Diſciples brought into great Trouble? let not God's Children at any time complain when this happens to be their Caſe alſo, nor ſay, with murmuring *Jacob* when afflicted, "All "theſe things are againſt me;" for all theſe things work for good to them that love God; "He chaſtneth them for their Profit that "they may be Partakers of his Holineſs:" Nay, Sorrow and Trouble is the Lot of all Men living, in a greater or leſs Degree, to anſwer ſome Purpoſe of the Divine Mercy and Goodneſs toward them, unleſs defeated by not profiting by them as they ought. How many would have ſunk into a total Forget-

Forgetfulneſs of God in the Eaſe and Sunſhine of a fatal Proſperity, who have been brought to ſeek the Lord by a gracious Adverſity! What Inſtances of Perſons being deprived of their moſt valued temporal Bleſſings, their deareſt Friends and neareſt Relations for their good, when theſe Comforts have become Snares to them and ſtolen their Affections from God? And how has a Fit of Sickneſs, or being brought into Peril of Death by any other Means, ſerved, like an Angel with his Sword drawn in the Way, to ſtop thoſe in the Career of their Wickedneſs who were ruſhing violently upon Deſtruction! Thus does the Lord bring us low, that He may bring us near to Himſelf, and humbleth us that He may exalt us in due Time: Were we not made ſenſible of our own Inſufficiency to help ourſelves, we ſhould not flee to Him for Succour; and were He not to ſuffer us to come into Trouble He could not be a Deliverer in our Diſtreſs, that ſo we might learn to praiſe Him.

We read that the Mariners in *Jonah's* Ship, upon occaſion of the Storm, feared the Lord exceedingly, and offered Sacrifice and made Vows; the Senſe of their Danger

Danger excited that of their Dependence; and their Deliverance ſtirred them up to the Exerciſe of Gratitude and Praiſe to that God who ſhews his Wonders in the Deep, and commands the Winds and the Sea, and they obey Him. It would be well, if the many Thouſands amongſt us that go down to the Sea in Ships, and occupy their Buſineſs in great Waters, thus feared the Lord and reverenced his Holy Name inſtead of polluting it with their horrid Oaths and Imprecations: It is indeed a ſad Conſideration, that they who ſtand indebted to the Goodneſs of Almighty God in a more peculiar manner for Preſervation in Dangers, ſhould be obſerved in general to live under leſs Senſe of Religion than any others.

But if Sufferings are deſigned to be of general uſe in bringing Men to Seriouſneſs, they are in a more particular manner uſeful to the Sons and Daughters of God, in exerciſing their Virtues, and to prepare them for greater degrees of Grace. Thus *David* could ſay, it was good for him that he had been afflicted, and every Saint beſides *David* that has been afflicted in like manner, has Reaſon to make the ſame Acknowledgment,

ledgment, or if he knows it not now, he ſhall know hereafter.

The Lord is oftentimes pleaſed to withdraw his Divine Comforts from his Servants after large Vouchſafements of his Favour, that they may not be exalted with their Gifts, nor aſcribe that to Nature which is wholly of Grace, Inſtances of which we have many in the holy Men of Old, particularly *Elijah*, *David*, and *Jeremiah*, whoſe ſore Tryals of this kind fetched from them very ſorrowful Complaints, not without a great Mixture of human Infirmity; for at ſuch Times they were alſo left in Darkneſs, and therefore loſt Sight of the Reaſons of the Divine Oeconomy: But yet to convince both them and us that tho' many are the Troubles of the Righteous, yet the Lord delivereth them out of all, we find that in the midſt of the Sorrows which they had in their Hearts God's Comforts did ſooner or later refreſh their Souls, and that even in the darkeſt Night of their Affliction the Lord did appear unto them, if not in the firſt or ſecond, yet in the third or fourth Watch, ſaying, *It is I, be not afraid*; "it was I that ſuffered this Diſcomfort to befal thee for the Tryal of thy

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Faith, or for thy Improvement in Humility, and therefore thou oughteſt not to have given way to Impatience and Diſtruſt, nor to ſorrow as Men without Hope; and it is I who am come now to thy Relief; therefore be of good Courage."

I come now to conſider the Inſide of the Narrative of which the Text is Part; for every Miracle that our Saviour wrought, and every Parable that He ſpake, reads us a Spiritual Leſſon. The Ship in the midſt of the Sea is an apt Emblem of Chriſt's Church in this temporary State of her Paſſage to Eternity, as the ſtormy Wind lifting up the Waves thereof is of the various Tryals and Perſecutions ſhe muſt expect to meet with in her Voyage to that Haven of Reſt where ſhe would be; and our Lord's walking upon the Sea to the Relief of his Diſciples, and his ſtilling the Raging of the Tempeſt, emphatically denotes his watchful and protecting Care of his Church in the worſt of Times, and that he is always with it even unto the End.

That the few faithful Servants of God have in all Ages of the World met with a ſtormy Paſſage thro' it, the Scripture Account of the Church, as far as it comes down,

down, abundantly teſtifies. The Oppoſition which the Children of the Kingdom were to expect from the Children of this World began to ſhew it ſelf ſo early as in the Days of *Cain* and *Abel*; and ſo far did Ungodlineſs prevail in the Earth that we read of but one Family fearing God remaining upon it after an Increaſe of Mankind thro' the Space of Two thouſand Years, and that Family doubtleſs ſuffering more from the Wickedneſs of the Times, than when afterwards toſſed in the Ark upon the Waves of an Univerſal Deluge. After the new World was repeopled we find but Threeſcore and ten Souls Worſhipers of the true God, and their Seed ſoon after brought under cruel Bondage to *Ægyptian* Tyrants: And when the *Iſraelites* were ſet free and conducted into the promiſed Land, how were they oppreſſed and perſecuted by the idolatrous Nations round about them, *Moabites* and *Ammonites*, *Philiſtines* and *Syrians*, as if the Church of God had been the Antitype of *Noah's* Dove, that could find no reſting Place for the Soles of her Feet; and as if the Fidelity and Obedience of one entire People had been too compleat a Sacrifice for *Adam's* fallen Race

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to offer up to God; behold Ten Tribes out of Twelve apostatizing from his Worship to Idolatry, and the few that were found faithful among them forced to hide themselves in Dens and Caves of the Earth. And has it fared better with the Christian Church! Did not the Dragon do his utmost to strangle the Child in its Infancy? Was not this holy Nation put to a severe Proof of her Constancy in her early Days by ten sharp Persecutions? and how many Thousands have sealed their Testimony with their Blood by the Murders and Massacres of After-times, finding as little Mercy from professing Christians of different Denominations as their Fore-fathers had done from Heathenish Idolaters. Add to this the many open Attacks which Christianity has sustained from the Armies of Infidelity, the Dangers it has been in from Heresy, Superstition and the Inventions of Men, and what is no less prejudicial to the Success of the Gospel, the great Scandal and Offence given to those that are without by the Immorality or mere Formality of many Professors, Men hating the Truth as it is in *Christ Jesus* as much as they disgrace it by their unholy Lives and vain Conversation.

If

If we take into the Account all these Difficulties and Discouragements, this Opposition and Enmity which the pure and holy Christian Faith has all along met with, and must still expect to meet with from a vain, infidel and wicked World, we must own, that the Church of Christ, as consisting of spiritual, heavenly-minded Christians, too justly resembles a Ship in Distress in the midst of the Sea, tossed with the Waves, and the Wind contrary. But the same Lord who saved *Noah* and his Family in the Ark from perishing by the Waters; who preserved the *Israelites* a distinct People Four Hundred Years in *Ægypt*; and in the most corrupt Times of *Jewish* Apostacy left himself Seven Thousand Souls that had not bowed the Knee to *Baal*; that same Lord hath in these degenerate Times a few, I trust that I may say many Names, even in this our *Sardis*, who have not defiled their Garments, but have kept the Faith, bear their Testimony to the Truth as it is in *Christ Jesus*, and walk worthy of that holy Vocation wherewith they are called; for however this or that outward national Church, whilst it retains the Form, may fall away by a ge-

neral Apoſtacy from the Life, Spirit and Power of Godlineſs, yet in the moſt corrupt Ages and Nations Chriſt has a Faithful Remnant of ſecret ones which conſtitute that holy inviſible Church which He has founded upon a Rock, and on which He will fulfil his Promiſe, that neither the Wind nor the Waves, nor the Gates of Hell ſhall prevail againſt it.

Having now conſidered the Text both in its Hiſtory and Myſtery, I proceed to make a ſpiritual Application of it to Two Sorts of Perſons: And firſt to ſuch as truſt in themſelves that they are righteous, and take not the Lord *Jeſus* for their Saviour.

And here, what will you do, O ye fooliſh ones! in the Day of your Calamity, when God ſhall come to prove what is in your Hearts, ſhall bring you into Peril of Death, and erect his Throne of Judgment in your Conſciences! For know of a Truth, that a Storm is appointed for your Tryal alſo. Behold then! the Tempeſt is begun, and thou art in the midſt of the Sea, toſſed with the Waves and the Wind againſt thee. What now is thy Strength, and wherein is thy Confidence? Canſt thou ſtill the rag-

ing

ing of the Sea? Canſt thou withſtand the Breath of God's Diſpleaſure when he ariſeth terribly to ſhake the Earth? Thou ſayſt that thou haſt eſtabliſhed thine own Righteouſneſs upon the ſtrong Mountains that cannot be ſhaken; but behold, the unſtable Water is thy Foundation! Beſides, thy Veſſel is frail and leaky, thy Sails rent and torn, the Anchor of thy Hope no better than a bended Reed, and the Cable wherein thou truſteſt but as a Green With which breaketh as a Thread of Tow is broken when it toucheth the Fire. But hark! the mighty God hath a Controverſy with thee: — He ſpeaketh out of the Whirlwind and biddeth thee prepare for thy Defence; for lo! a dreadful Accuſation is brought againſt thee. Thou art charged with the Guilt of High Treaſon againſt the Sovereign Majeſty of Heaven; with having defaced the Divine Image in thy Soul, broken God's Laws, deſpiſed his Goodneſs, defied his Power, and rebelled againſt his Government. What now is thy Plea? and wherewith wilt thou come before the moſt High? Wilt thou gird up thy Loins like a Man and anſwer for thyſelf? Bring forth then thy ſtrong Reaſons and proceed to thy Defence—but

consider well how thou maintainest thy Cause, and what thou hast to offer in Arrest of Judgment; for God is Judge Himself, and He trieth the very Secrets of the Heart. Wilt thou plead thine Innocence and Purity before thy Judge? Alas, fond Man! forbear this Plea, or thou shalt be found a Lyar before God, for thou art corrupt in the very Essence and first Forms of thy Nature, wast conceived in Sin, and shapen in Iniquity, and consequently born a Child of Wrath; and therefore except thou be spiritually born again, and so brought into the true Filiation by Adoption and Grace, thou canst not inherit the Kingdom of Heaven. Urge not, then, fallen Man! thy native Innocence before a God of infinite Purity and Holiness, for in this respect shall no Man living be justified, nor any one that is born of a Woman be accounted clean before Him; yea, "the Stars are not clean in his Sight; "how much less Man that is Corruption, "and the Son of Man that is but a Worm."

But perhaps thou chusest to stand upon thy Obedience, and therefore appealest to the Law and the Testimony for thy Justification: To the Law and the Testimony then thou shalt go, and they shall be thy Judges:

Judges: But take heed, O Man, what thou doeſt! For herein thou appealeſt to a Court that ſheweth no Mercy; and therefore unleſs thou canſt bring with thee a perfect Obedience to the whole Law in every Jot and Tittle of its Requirements, come not near the dreadful burning Mount of *Sinai*; for what ſaith the Voice? — "Curſed is "every one that continueth not in all things "which are written in the Book of the Law "to do them." But art thou reſolved to abide by thy Plea, and to put the Iſſue of thy Trial upon the Validity of it? Stand forth then and anſwer, before Heaven and Earth, for Men and Angels are thy Witneſſes. Haſt thou kept the whole Law, and walked in all the Commandments and Ordinances of the Lord blameleſs from thy Youth up until now? Haſt thou never done thoſe things which thou oughteſt not to have done; and never left undone thoſe things which thou ſhouldeſt have done? Haſt thou ever been a dutiful Child, and loved the Lord thy God with all thine Heart, with all thy Soul, and with all thy Strength, and thy Neighbour as thyſelf? Haſt thou ſet a watch continually upon the Door of thy Lips, and never offended with thy Tongue? And

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And haſt thou preſerved thy Mind at all Times free from every unclean and ſinful Thought, Deſire, Imagination, and Luſt; For know, that God's Commandment is exceeding broad, and extendeth to the inmoſt Receſſes of the Soul. — Speak now, O Priſoner, and anſwer to thy Examination, for thou art upon Life and Death! — What, anſwereſt thou nothing! How is it that thy Countenance is fallen, and that thou art become ſpeechleſs in the Judgment! The Reaſon is evident—thy Plea of Obedience hath failed thee — thy Conſcience teſtifies againſt againſt thee—and the Law is become the Miniſtration of thy Condemnation. Behold, O Man! O Woman! whoever thou art that ſeekeſt to be juſtified by thy Doings, this is thy very Caſe—Thou art weighed in the Ballance and found wanting—thou art convicted of being a Debtor to the Law, and therefore ſhalt be caſt into Priſon till thou haſt paid the uttermoſt Farthing, but this thou ſhalt never be able to do to all Eternity.

Come then, my fellow Sinners, be perſuaded, ere it be too late, to retract your Pleas of Innocence and Obedience, to renounce as well your Righteouſneſs, as your

your Unrighteousness, and to cast yourselves upon the Mercies of God in *Christ Jesus*. If you are obstinately bent upon standing Tryal at the Bar of God's Justice, I am bold to tell you that you are undone for ever, nor will it be in the Power of all the Host of Heaven to help you, for every Soul of Man is guilty before God, guilty of shedding the Blood of the Son of God, and therefore God's Justice is the Man-slayer, the Avenger of Blood: Flee then for your Lives—Flee for your Souls to the City of Refuge, and lay hold on the Horns of the Altar, for herein lies your only Safety, even in the Merits and atoning Blood of that Lamb of God whom our Sins have crucified and slain: Such is the Love of *Jesus* to Sinners!—Such is the Love of *Jesus* to his Murderers!—Are we then void of all Righteousness in ourselves that can justify? all Transgressors of God's holy Law, and as such liable to the Curse and Condemnation of it? Let us go as poor, penitent Sinners in Faith to the Author and Mediator of a better Covenant, even to Him who is *the End of the Law for Righteousness to all them that believe*, and who has *fulfilled the Law, and was made Sin for us, that we might*

might be made the Righteouſneſs of God IN HIM. So ſhall He be to us a *Jeſus* to ſave us from our Sins; and ſo ſhall we be able to ſay to him with Confidence in the Judgment: Thou ſhalt anſwer for me, O Lord my God! *For henceforth there is no Condemnation to them that are in Chriſt Jeſus.*

To conclude with a Word to thoſe who put their Truſt in the Lord, and in that Righteouſneſs which is of God by Faith.

Art thou a Chriſtian? Suffer a Word of Exhortation, and permit me to remind thee that thou art on a Voyage to Eternity in the midſt of a tempeſtuous Ocean, where many Difficulties and Dangers await thee; and therefore that thou muſt prepare thy Soul for Temptation. What if from thy firſt ſetting out until now the Wind has been fair and thy Paſſage favourable, yet flatter not thyſelf with vain Hopes, that it will hold thus with thee unto the End; for no one ever yet reached the Shore of the heavenly *Canaan* without meeting a Storm by the Way. *Moſes*, and *Job*, and *David*, and all the Worthies of old Time bear Witneſs to this Truth from more than common Experience; nay, the Son of God himſelf had

had a Conflict with the ſharpeſt Storm that Nature ever felt, for the Prince of the Power of the Air and all the Potentates of Darkneſs conſpired to heighten the Fury and Horrors of it; yea, the Wrath of God was in it, and therefore it ſhook both Heaven and Earth. How then mayſt thou hope to eſcape without encountering ſome adverſe Blaſt?

But perhaps thou art already come to thy Tryal, and therefore ſtandeſt more in need of Comfort than Warning: The ſtormy Wind perhaps is already riſen, Tribulation and Anguiſh have got faſt hold on thee, and thou art to thy thinking vexed with all God's Storms; without are Fightings and within are Fears, whilſt thou art left in Darkneſs and in the Deep, without one Gleam of Light or Comfort to chear thy benighted Soul, and ſerve thee for an Anchor of Hope: Nay, it may be, thou art not only toſſed with theſe Waves of Affliction and Sorrow, which ſhake the very Foundations of thy Faith, but the Wind alſo is contrary; God's Providences ſeem all againſt thee, thy beſt Purpoſes and Reſolutions are defeated; thy moſt promiſing Hopes miſcarry, and thou proſpereſt in

in nothing thou putteſt thine Hand unto; yea thy very Prayers and Devotions ſeem not able to make their Way to the Mercy Seat, but to be blown back into thy Face by ſome envious evil Blaſt, and thou art tempted to caſt away all thy Confidence in thy God. Theſe things are hard indeed, and ſeemingly againſt thee: But do not give Way to deſponding Thoughts, "O thou "Afflicted, toſſed with Tempeſt and not "comforted!" For what ſaith the Lord? "For a ſmall Moment have I forſaken "thee; but with great Mercies will I gather "thee."

Be not then diſmayed, O Chriſtian Voyager, tho' the Wind and the Waves be againſt thee: Nay, tho' Spectres and Devils ſhould be in the Way, yet make reſolutely for the other Side: Beſides, what wouldſt thou do! Thou art already half Way on thy Voyage; and ſhouldſt thou turn back, even ſo likewiſe thou mayſt ſuffer Shipwreck in the Storm: Or, in caſe of thy ſafe Arrival in the Country which thou hadſt forſaken, thou muſt expect to be treated with all the Reproach and Ignominy of a Deſerter, and at laſt take up thy Abode in the City of Deſtruction, which ſhall ſhortly

be consumed with Fire: Better then, far better, if thou needs must perish, that thou perish in the right Way. Turn not back, then; nay cast not a wishful Look towards the Devoted Shore, but set thy Face unalterably fixt upon the promised Land: Neither faint, nor slacken thy Diligence to hold on thy Course, tho' the Waters rage and swell, and tho' the Mountains shake because of the Tempest; for Deliverance is near at hand; and the Lord is a present Help in Time of Trouble: That same *Jesus* who encountered the bitter Tempest of God's Wrath and prevailed, will overcome for thee in this Storm also. Behold! He is in the midst of the Sea, tho' thou knowest Him not — He hears thee when thou criest unto Him in thy Trouble, and will deliver thee out of thy Distress; for He maketh the Storm to cease, so that the Waves thereof are still: So shalt thou be glad when thou art at rest, when He bringeth thee unto the Haven where thou wouldst be.

And now, O Blessed Lord! who hast appointed thy chosen Servants to many Difficulties and Dangers for the Tryal of their Faith and Constancy, and for the Glory of thy

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thy Name in their Deliverance: Suffer not the Spirit of thy feeble ones to fail before thee in the Day of their Calamity and Distreſs, but be with them in every Storm, and ſtand by them in every Temptation. Thou haſt graciouſly promiſed, that when we paſs thro' the Waters thou wilt be with us, and that when we paſs thro' the Fire we ſhall not be burnt—Be it unto us, O Lord, according to thy Word: But above all, ſtand by us in our laſt and greateſt Extremities: In the Hour of Death, and in the Day of Judgment, good Lord, deliver us!

SER-

SERMON V.

Spiritual Worſhip, the Religion of the Law and the Goſpel.

Preached at the VISITATION of the Rev. JOHN BROWNE, D. D. Archdeacon of *Northampton*, held at *Northampton*, *April* 30, 1747.

JOHN iv. 23.

The Hour cometh, and now is, when the true Worſhipers ſhall worſhip the Father in Spirit and in Truth: for the Father ſeeketh ſuch to worſhip him.

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THESE Words are Part of a Conference between our Bleſſed Lord and the Woman of *Samaria* at *Jacob's* Well, and particularly refer to a Queſtion of her's touching the true Place of Divine Worſhip; whether it was Mount *Gerizim*, as the *Samaritans* held; or the Temple at *Jeruſalem*, according to the Religion of the *Jews*. Our Saviour declared in favour of the latter; *Ye worſhip*, ſays he, *ye know not what: we know what we worſhip*;

for

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for Salvation is of the Jews: Hereby not only condemning the Defection of the *Samaritans* from the *Jewiſh* Church, and that impure Mixture of Idolatry and heatheniſh Superſtition, with which their Commerce, and Affinity with the *Aſſyrians*, had infected them, but alſo pronouncing the *Jewiſh* to be the true viſible Church of God; — *Salvation is of the Jews.* — In their Cuſtody is the Law, and the Writings of the Prophets; among them is the Prieſthood eſtabliſhed by God, and that Form of Worſhip which he has appointed; and of them is the *Meſſiah*, the *Chriſt*.—

Iſa. ii. 3. *Out of Zion*, therefore, *ſhould go forth the Law, and the Word of the Lord from Jeruſalem.*

But our Saviour, not content with ſetting her right in this Particular (for now Converts were to be made, not to *Judaiſm* but *Chriſtianity*) acquaints her, that all Diſputes about Locality of Worſhip were frivolous and unconcerning, ſeeing that Diſtinction of Place, which had till then obtained for the offering up of Sacrifices, and the more ſolemn Celebration of Divine Worſhip, was upon the point of ceaſing, and the Time at hand, when God Almighty

Almighty would be served in a more free and unconfined manner, and that of the Heart should be the only true and acceptable Religion;—*The Hour cometh, and now is, when the true Worshipers shall worship the Father in Spirit and in Truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.* SERMON V.

To worship God in *Spirit* does here plainly denote inward Piety and Holiness, in Contradistinction to the Ceremonial Law of the *Jews*, as it stood circumstanced in its several peculiar Rites and Forms of an outward Worship; as to worship him in *Truth*, relates to that fuller Display of it in the Gospel of Christ, who is indeed *Truth* in the very Abstract, as he is God *blessed for ever*; and in his Person and Offices, as God-man, is the very Antitype and Substance pointed at, and set forth, in so many figurative Representations under the Law, of which they were the Shadows and Resemblance only, and not the Truth itself. In this Sense, therefore, as *The Law was given by Moses, so Grace and Truth came by Jesus Christ.* Rom. ix. 5. John i. 17.

But was not the Law then a Spiritual Service? and was not God to be worshiped in Spirit and Truth then as well as

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now? Yes, verily; and for the very Reaſon aſſigned by our Lord in the following Verſe, for that God *is a Spirit*; which Argument concludes as ſtrongly for ſpiritual Worſhip in the former as in the latter Caſe, and yet without any way leſſening the Propriety, or weakening the Force of it, as urged upon the Occaſion before us; as will appear in its proper Place.

But may it not be aſked here, Wherein was the Law a Spiritual Religion? In the Moral or Ceremonial Part of it? Be it anſwered, Both in the one and the other, as to the Aim and Direction of it. This appears from the Ends aſſigned for its Delivery, two of which, as the moſt principal, and given by St. *Paul*, I ſhall briefly touch upon.

And, firſt, the Law (*i. e.* the Moral) was given as a Rule of Life, and to ſhew Men both their Sin, and their Duty: For ſuch was the Corruption and Blindneſs of our Nature after the Fall, by the infatuating Power of Sin, that the human Race had, in many Particulars, loſt the Diſtinctions of moral Good and Evil; nay, had erred in that great fundamental Point, the Knowledge

Knowledge and Worship of the One True God: And therefore, in Reply to that Question — *Wherefore serveth the Law?* St. *Paul* answers, *It was added because of Transgressions.* He elsewhere declares, that *by the Law is the Knowledge of Sin*; and instances in himself for the Truth of the Assertion: — *I had not known Sin, but by the Law*; *for I had not known Lust, except the Law had said, Thou shalt not covet.* SERMON V. Gal. iii. 19. Rom. iii. 20. Rom. vii. 7.

Some of the Heathens have indeed said many fine things on the Side of Virtue; but their Systems are all wretchedly defective, as theirs could not but be, who neither knew the Malady of human Nature, nor its Cure; nay, were Strangers to the Love of God, which is the Foundation of all true Morality, and grossly ignorant of his Nature and Attributes. Their Virtues therefore were, for the most part, of a political Nature, tallying well enough with the Interests of Civil Society, but little perfective of the Soul, and oftentimes the Result of Pride and Selfishness, Humour and affected Singularity. Some Virtues were passed over by all, and some Vices stood both uncondemned, and practised by most of them: And as to those few great Names among

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them, who roſe above the common Level, and are diſtinguiſhed by the Sublimity of their Sentiments, and their nearer Approaches to Truth; their Doctrines and Precepts wanted the Sanction of Authority, and therefore could go but a little way in gaining upon the Belief and Practice of the World.

At what a low Ebb the Religion of Nature was in St. *Paul's* Time, when human Learning was near its Zenith, may be judged of by his Diſcourſe to the Men of *Athens*, and from the firſt Chapter of his Epiſtle to the *Romans*. What ſhocking Degeneracy and Corruption do they there ſtand charged with! What Blindneſs and Ignorance with regard to the firſt Principle of all Religion! *The World*, ſays he, *by Wiſdom knew not God:* All the Learning of the Schools, and the ſo much boaſted Philoſophy of *Greece* and *Rome* had not taught them the firſt Article of Nature's Creed, nor done ſo much for them as the Light of Nature, dim as it was, and the Law of Conſcience, might have done; for in *the viſible things of God* they might have clearly ſeen *his eternal Power and Godhead*; *and the Law written in their Hearts*, if carefully attended to, would

Acts xvii. 23.

1 Cor. i. 21.

Rom. i. 21.

would, in many Cases, have served them for a Monitor and Judge, *their Consciences bearing Witness, and their Thoughts accusing or excusing them:* But *becoming vain in their Imaginations, their foolish Heart was darkened; and professing themselves wise, they became Fools.* And yet these are the Men, whom the World makes such a Stir about; and to know their ignorant Conjectures is accounted so great a Part of our Wisdom. Some of the wiser and more virtuous Heathens, particularly among the *Platonists*, are excepted from this general Rule, as both their Lives and their Writings challenge our Admiration and Esteem.

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Rom. ii. 15.

Rom. i. 21.

If we go back to the Time of the Delivery of the Law we shall, in like manner, find the whole World over-run with Idolatry and Superstition; nor had all the Learning of the *Egyptians* secured them from the common Infection: So weak a Fence has human Reason ever been against the Corruptions of human Nature; and of such Necessity is a Divine Revelation, not only to enforce a general Obedience to, but also to furnish fallen Man with the Knowledge of the Divine Will. What shall

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we ſay then of thoſe mighty Men of Reaſon, who, in theſe latter Days, pretend to have found out a compleat Syſtem of Duties, without being at all obliged to Revelation for the Diſcovery? who know ſo dextrouſly how to *delineate the Religion of Nature* by the Sufficiency of their own Skill, and to lay a Foundation for every Virtue in ſome new-invented Fitneſs and Congruity of Things: Sure, I think, we may ſay, that they themſelves are an Inſtance of the Defect of their Schemes, by the want of at leaſt one Virtue, and that is Humility; which would lead them to acknowledge the Helps they have received, and that, if they ſee farther than their Forefathers, it is not owing to the great Sharpneſs of their Sight, but to the Eminence of their Station: They ſtand upon holy Ground, and are indebted to the Scriptures (though they are not ingenuous enough to own it) for their Elevation: But to return.

Such was the State and Condition of the World, with reſpect to Religion, when it pleaſed Almighty God to reveal the Law by *Moſes* to the Children of *Iſrael*; to to point out to them the Nature of Sin (by which

which they had fallen from the Love of God) and to be a Means of recovering them from this Apostasy; for a mere external Obedience was not the End of the Law, any farther than such Obedience was an Expression and Test of their Love of God, which our Saviour styles *the first and great Commandment:* They were to be a People consecrated to God according to that very significant *Memento*, written on the Mitre of *Aaron*,—*Holiness to the Lord*; and to have *the Lord for their God* meant nothing less than to have him for the sole Happiness of their Lives, and Object of their Affections, as well as for their Lawgiver and Governor. Nor is it to be doubted, that many of those Rites and Ordinances which seem to have little or no Relation to a spiritual Worship, were yet calculated for that End, by serving as Emblems of some divine Truth, to represent the distempered Condition of human Nature, to separate them from the Commerce and Pollutions of the Heathens, or some way to engage their Attention in such a manner as might lead them to the Love of God, or keep them from any Hindrance to it: Certain it is, that the Rite of Circumcision, which had been instituted

Matth. xxii. 38.

Exod. xxviii. 36.

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ſtituted long before, is interpreted both by *Moſes* and St. *Paul*, as a Figure of inward Purity of Heart; and thoſe only were called true *Jews* by the latter, which were ſuch, not *outwardly*, but *inwardly*. We know, therefore, that *the Law was ſpiritual*, and required inward Purity, as well as outward Practice, according to that Command of the Lord by *Moſes* to the Children of *Iſrael*, *Ye ſhall be holy; for I, the Lord your God, am holy.*

Deut. x. 6. Rom. ii. 29.

Ibid.

Levit. xix. 2.

But this being the Caſe, how comes it to paſs, that Juſtification was not by the Law; for it is written, *By the Works of the Law ſhall no Fleſh be juſtified.* St. *Paul* has ſatisfied this Queſtion, where he tells us, that *the Law was weak through the Fleſh. The Commandment was* indeed *holy, juſt, and good*, and the Law a perfect Rule of Duty, and *the Man that did the things contained in it, ſhould have lived by them:* But where was the Man, the Man *Chriſt Jeſus* excepted, that ever did them? The Weakneſs of the Fleſh, the Impotence of fallen Nature, was ſuch, that no Man ever did or could pay that perfect Obedience which the Law required; and ſo all came under the Curſe of it; for it is written, *Curſed is every*

Gal. ii. 16.

Rom. viii. 3.

Ib. vii. 12.

Ib. x. 5.

Gal. iii. 10.

one that continueth not in all things which are written in the Book of the Law to do them. Herein then the Law failed, in that it gave not Strength to those that were under it, to pay that perfect Obedience which it exacted; and yet passed Sentence of Death, in Case of Disobedience, and so became *the Ministration of Condemnation.* But were not Sacrifices appointed by the Law, in Case of Transgressions, and thereby a Cure provided for the Disease? They were indeed appointed; but, alas! they went but a little Way towards the Cure wanted; they could only *sanctify outwardly to the purifying of the Flesh*; but could not *take away Sin*, nor *make the Comers thereunto perfect:* The Blood of Bulls and Goats could not wash away inherent Corruption, and *purge the Conscience from dead Works*— No, *it costs more to redeem a Soul from Death*; and, were it to be left to that, *it must be let alone for ever.*

2 Cor. iii. 9.

Heb. ix. 13. Ib. x. 4. Ib. x. 1.

Ps. xlix. 8.

Thus far then the Matter seems not mended; and the Law, instead of being Gain, has brought Loss to the Soul; for under this View of it, Sin is become exceeding sinful; and, as *the Sting of Death is Sin, so the Strength of Sin is the Law:*

1 Cor. xv. 56.

The

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The Light it gives ſerves to ſet our Tranſgreſſions before us in full View, with aggravated Guilt; and Sin followed by Conviction comes home with double Force, and gives the Soul a deeper Wound. May we not then recur to the former Queſtion, and aſk *To what then ſerveth the Law?* The Anſwer to which is the ſecond End aſſigned by St. *Paul* to that Diſpenſation: *The Law was our Schoolmaſter to bring us unto Chriſt.*

Gal. iii. 24.

Though the Law and the Goſpel ſtand diſtinguiſhed under different Titles, and as different Covenants, yet are they but two Manifeſtations of the one great Scheme of the Redemption of the World by *Jeſus Chriſt:* The former, in every Part of it, points and leads to this End. The Law, in its Time and Place, was the Twilight of the Day of Grace; and the Shining of the Face of *Moſes*, as that of the Morning-Star, Harbinger to that Sun of Righteouſneſs, which afterwards aroſe *with Healing in his Wings.* If we trace back the mighty Deliverer to the firſt Promiſe of his Coming, we ſhall find Chriſtianity nearly as old as the Creation; and I make no Doubt of the Truth of this Aſſertion, That, from the Account of the Fall to the End of the Book

Exod. xxxiv. 35.

Mal. iv. 2.

of

of *Geneſis*, every principal Narrative has a ſpecial Reference to Chriſt, and our Redemption by him; and that ſome Part or other of this great Myſtery is ſignified and repreſented to us all along under the Truth of the Hiſtory: But to return: SERMON V.

The Law ſerved as a School-maſter to bring ſuch as were under it to Chriſt, chiefly by the condemning Power of it; for as many as were *under the Law*, were *under the Curſe of it*. The Sin of *Adam* was become the Sin of every Man's own Perſon; and Death, both temporal and eternal, had paſſed upon all, by the double Right and Title of original and actual Sin: But, behold the Wiſdom, and Power, and Goodneſs of God! who out of Weakneſs ordaineth Strength, and turneth the Powers of Death and *Satan* to the Deſtruction of their own Kingdom; for the poor helpleſs Soul, finding the Sentence of Death in itſelf, ſinking under the Terrors of the Law, and the dreaded Wrath of a ſin-avenging God, and deſpairing to obtain Salvation by its own Righteouſneſs, caſts itſelf upon the Mercy of God, as deſirous to have it in the way of *Free-gift*: And in this State of Anguiſh and Diſtreſs the ceremonial Law comes in to its Relief, Gal. iii. 10. Rom. v. 16.

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Relief, and, under its various Sacrifices, and other Types and Figures, exhibits the Great Deliverer, the true *City of Refuge* from the *Avenger of Blood*, even Chriſt, *the End of the Law for Righteouſneſs*, to all that believed on him then, as well as now; So that Repentance and Faith in Chriſt were the Means of Salvation (tho' no expreſs Terms of the Covenant) under the Law, as well as the Goſpel: *Abraham*, ſays our Saviour, *ſaw my Day, and was glad:* And all ſpiritual *Jews*, who were the Children of *Abraham's* Faith, ſaw the ſame, and were glad likewiſe: But, as to the Generality, it was not ſo with them; they contented themſelves with being *Jews* only in the Letter, and with that *Circumciſion*, *which was outward in the Fleſh*, and, like titular *Chriſtians* now-a-days, placed the Whole of Religion in the Outſide of it: They paſſed over the more ſubſtantial Duties of the Moral Law, and reſted in the Ceremonial, without carrying on their View to the End and Deſign of their Sacrifices, or reaping any ſpiritual Benefit from their divine Ordinances: By which groſs Abuſe and Neglect they became to them Statutes that were not good, carnal Commandments without

Numb. xxxv. 12. Rom. x. 4.

John viii. 56.

Rom. ii. 28.

out Use and Meaning, and the Whole of their Worship a mere *bodily Exercise that profited nothing*. In order to remedy these Abuses, and to preserve the Life and Power of Religion among them, God Almighty was pleased to raise up an Order of Men of an abstemious and mortified Life, who, in the Spirit of Prophecy, denounced God's Threatnings and Judgments upon the Corruptions both of Priests and People, and boldly rebuked, even Kings, for their irreligious Backslidings: They were earnest in preaching up Repentance, and solid Piety; in condemning the *Iniquity of their holy things*, their commuting Sacrifices, and *vain Oblations*; and in directing their Views and Hopes to the *Messiah*, and his spiritual Kingdom, both through their typical Representations of him, and by express Prophecies concerning him: But neither had this Provision the desired Effect: — *Israel did not know*; for this *People would not consider:* Inward Reformation they were averse to; and these holy Messengers were accounted no better than Enthusiasts and Madmen; they persecuted and slew them.

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1 Tim. iv. 8.

Exod. xxviii. 38.

Isai. i. 13.

Ib. i. 3.

Such was the State of the *Jewish* Church when Christ, the great Author of our Salvation,

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Salvation, made his Appearance in the Fleſh, and tabernacled among Men. The Service of the Temple, and the outward Forms of Religion, were indeed kept up; but the Power of Godlineſs was not: And in this Judgment we cannot be miſtaken, when the ſtricteſt Sect amongſt them ſtands charged by our Bleſſed Lord in ſo many Places with Formality and Hypocriſy: The Words therefore before us, and the Argument uſed in the following Verſe, in Support of the Doctrine contained in them, are urged with great Propriety, Application, and Inſtruction; and do alſo ſet forth the greater Purity and Perfection of the Chriſtian Religion; at the Approach of which the Veil ſhould be done away from off the Face of *Moſes*, the ſhadowy Repreſentations of our Redemption by Types and Figures give place to the Manifeſtation of the great Redeemer in Perſon, and the many cumberſome Rites and Ceremonies of the *Moſaic* Law be ſuperſeded by Goſpel Purity and Holineſs: *The Hour cometh, and now is, when the true Worſhipers ſhall worſhip the Father in Spirit and in Truth.*

Theſe Words are evidently expreſſive of the Power of Godlineſs, or divine Life, in the

the Soul, which is elsewhere styled by our Lord, *the Kingdom of God within us:* And it is in this Light I shall briefly consider Christianity in what remains of this Discourse: Nor indeed can it in any other Sense be called, as it truly and emphatically is, *the Power of God unto Salvation.*

SERMON V. Luke xvii. 21.

That true Religion is something spiritual, and perfective of the Soul, is clearly the Voice of Reason, as well as of Revelation; and the Argument made use of by our Saviour to prove it, is drawn from a rational Apprehension of God as a Spirit: And as the great Object, so likewise the Subject, of all Religion, is spiritual (for the Soul is of divine Original;) and consequently all Relation and Intercourse betwixt them must be spiritual: But there is one great Reason still behind, why true and saving Religion must needs be spiritual; and that is, the Condition of our Nature in Consequence of the Fall: The human Soul had thereby suffered a deadly Wound; the Image of God, in which consisted its Happiness and Perfection, was departed from it; and that Temple, in which the Holy Trinity delighted to dwell, was become polluted and defiled with Sin, and a Nest of unclean Spirits: Here then was a

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ſpiritual Malady to be cured, a Loſs of ſomething ſpiritual and divine to be reſtored, and all the Powers of Hell to be ſubdued; the *ſtrong Man armed*, that kept the Houſe, muſt be diſlodged by one that is *ſtronger than he:* But where was the mighty Champion to effect the vaſt Deſign? Fallen Man, like *Sampſon*, ſhorn of his Strength, was faſt bound in the Hands of the Enemy, and, among the Angels none was found able to deliver him: Here then appeared the Goodneſs of God, in laying *Help upon one that was mighty:* Herein was manifeſted the Love of Chriſt, in taking the *Government* of this great Work *upon his Shoulder.* The Union of the divine and human Nature was the only Expedient found ſufficient for the Recovery of a loſt World; and it needs muſt be, that the Son of God become Man, that the Children of Men might become the Sons of God. The Promiſe, that *the Seed of the Woman* ſhould *bruiſe the Serpent's Head*, was the firſt Diſcovery of this ſtupendous Myſtery; and the important Buſineſs of our Redemption commenced immediately upon it, and was carried on from that Time under a wonderful Succeſſion

Luke xi. 22.

Pſ. lxxxix. 20.

Iſai. ix. 6.

Gen. iii. 15.

Succession of Providences and Dispensations towards its blessed Completion. SERMON V.

But was this mysterious Union to be transacted only in the Person of the ever-adorable Redeemer? Not so: It was indeed begun in him; but through him it was in a degree to take place in every individual Soul of the human Race, in order to its Salvation; that, *as in Adam all died, even so in Christ should all be made alive:* As much of the Divine Perfections as was lost to the Soul by the communicated Infection of Sin from the first *Adam*, must be derived into it from the second *Adam*, as from another Fountain of the human Race, that *both he that sanctifieth*, and *they who are sanctified*, may be *all of one*. Nothing that is extrinsick to the Nature of the Soul, or that passes without it, can raise and restore a fallen Soul; but it must be fashioned anew, and a Meetness for Glory formed in the inmost Essence of it; *for Corruption cannot inherit Incorruption:* And therefore, *make me a clean Heart, O God, and renew a right Spirit within me*, was not only the Prayer of *David*, but also of every other enlightened Person under the Law, as well as since, from a full Conviction of this Truth. Our Blessed Lord

1 Cor. xv. 22.

Heb. ii. 11.

1 Cor. xv. 50. Psal. li. 10.

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bears Teſtimony to the Neceſſity of this great Change or Renovation which muſt paſs upon the Soul, to qualify it for Bliſs, in that ſolemn Aſſeveration to *Nicodemus*: *Verily, verily, I ſay unto thee, Except a Man be born again, he cannot ſee the Kingdom of God:* And did the Doctrine of Regeneration reſt only upon this ſingle Text, we muſt allow it ſufficiently eſtabliſhed; but this is ſo far from being the Caſe, that it is ſet forth under a great Variety of ſimilar Expreſſions, on purpoſe that we might be left in no Uncertainty as to the Truth and Meaning of it: As where the true Chriſtian is ſaid to *put on Chriſt*; to have him *dwelling in his Heart by Faith*; to be *renewed in the Spirit of his Mind*; and that *as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the Sons of God.* In like manner — *the new Creature*; *the new Man*; *the Sanctification of the Spirit*; to be *born of the Spirit*; and to be *alive unto God through Jeſus Chriſt*, do all imply a new Principle of Life in the Soul, which it has not in its natural State, and evince the Truth of this fundamental Article of our Faith to a Demonſtration: Nor does it ſtand only in the Strength of a few picked Paſſages, but makes

John iii. 3.

Rom. xiii. 14. Eph. iii. 17. Jb iv. 23. Rom. viii. 14.

2 Cor. v. 17. Eph. iv. 24 2 Theſſ. ii. 13. John iii. 8. Rom. vi. 11.

makes a conſiderable Part of the Language of the New Teſtament: Nay, it is both the Bottom and Top of all Religion: All that Chriſt has done and ſuffered, was in order to bring about this great Work of Regeneration in us; and the Sacraments he ordained, are only the outward viſible Signs and Means of it: In a word, all that Man has to do in this World is to ſeek and ſue for it; and all the Happineſs he expects in the next, muſt be the Reſult of it.

Let us now, in one ſhort View, ſee how all the chief Duties of the Chriſtian Religion accord and harmonize with this Principle. Repentance, and Faith, confeſſedly ſtand at the *Head* of this Catalogue; and theſe are the Ground-work of this new Building, the two main Pillars of Goſpel Salvation. *John the Baptiſt* came to prepare the Way, by preaching the former; and his great Maſter began his Miniſtry with *Repent, and believe the Goſpel.* *Secondly*, The Evangelical Virtues of Humility, Meekneſs, Patience, Hope, Charity, *&c.* are all inward Habits and Graces relative to the ſpiritual Life; ſuch as diſpoſe the Soul for farther Communications of the Holy Spirit, and make it a fit

Mark i. 15.

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Manſion for his ſacred Reſidence. *Thirdly*, The Doctrines of Self-denial and Mortification, laid down in the Goſpel, are greatly ſubſervient to this End, as the Practice of theſe Duties tends to purify the Soul from all the Droſs and Diſorder of irregular Paſſions, and keeps it free from all undue Attachments to the Things of this World, which, by irreſiſtible Diſtractions, call off the Attention from Divine Truths, fix it on ſenſible Objects, and render the Mind incapable of ſavouring the Things that be of God: It is therefore by this Kind of holy Violence committed on ourſelves, that we reſiſt the Motions of corrupt Nature, break thoſe Bands aſunder which tie down the Affections to Things below, and ſo take the Kingdom of Heaven by Force. *Laſtly*, This Principle of Divine Life and Love, wrought in us by the Holy Spirit, ſtands cloſely connected with the whole Syſtem of Chriſtian Morality; it is the only ſure Foundation on which it can reſt, the true Source from which it derives both its Beauty and Virtue: This is *the Altar* which *ſanctifieth the Gift* in all our Offerings: Whilſt we act in and from this Principle, *a Cup of cold Water* ſhall intitle us to a Reward; and, without

Matth. x. 42.

it,

it, *though we give all our Goods to feed the Poor, and our Bodies to be burned* for Religion, *it will profit us nothing:* As therefore, when we *add unto* our *Faith Virtue*, we give Evidence of its being a Gospel and living Faith; so when our Virtue proceeds from our Faith, as the genuine Effect and Fruit of it; and we can truly say with the Apostle, *The Life, which I now live in the Flesh, I live by the Faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me*, our Works then, and only then, become good and acceptable to God by *Jesus Christ*.

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1 Cor. xiii. 3.

Gal. ii. 20.

We have had much Disputing of late about *Justification*, whilst some have taken the Side of *Faith*, and others that of *Works*, thus dividing those Things which God hath closely joined together in the Christian Life; and therefore no Man ought to put them asunder: If indeed no more was meant by *Faith* than a mere historical Faith, a bare Assent of the Mind to the Credibility of Things (in the Language of the Schools,) as far forth as credible; a Belief of something extorted by Dint of Argument, rising no higher than moral Evidence can force it, and sinking again under the Objections of every

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ſubtle Diſputant; if this be all that is meant by *Goſpel Faith*, it would indeed be Matter of Wonder, if ſuch a Faith could juſtify: If this were a ſaving Faith, I ſhould think the very Devils capable of Salvation: But ſurely we do not mean, that this is the Faith of which St. *Paul* ſpeaks ſo many great and glorious Things; that *Faith* by which the Heb. xi. 33. Saints of old *ſubdued Kingdoms, wrought Righteouſneſs, obtained the Promiſes, ſtopped the Mouths of Lions*, and did ſo many other marvellous Works: It cannot be ſaid, that ſuch is the Faith defined by the ſame Ib. xi. 1. Apoſtle to be *the Subſtance of Things hoped for, the Evidence of Things not ſeen*; putting us into a kind of preſent Poſſeſſion of the Promiſes, and ſetting Divine Truths before the Mind in all the Light and Power of Demonſtration: It cannot, I am ſure, with any Truth or Propriety be ſo ſaid of it: The Faith then that we contend for, as truly Chriſtian and juſtifying, does not ariſe from hiſtorical Evidence only; much leſs does it conſiſt in forced Speculations, or the uncertain Concluſions of human Reaſon; but Eph. ii. 8. is of higher Extraction, *even the Gift of God*: It is a Seed of the Divine Life in the Soul, growing up in a gradual Approach

towards

towards Perfection, and bringing forth the Fruits of the Spirit; *a Faith working by Love*, producing Obedience to all God's Commands, and abounding in good Works, according to that Measure of Abilities which God hath given us: It is a Power from on high, at once enlightening and converting the Soul; it is that *Victory* whereby we *overcome the World:* And, to sum up all in this emphatical Conclusion, it is hereby that *Christ* becomes *Immanuel*, or *God with us*, and *is made unto us Wisdom, and Righteousness, and Sanctification, and Redemption.*

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Gal. v. 6.

1 Joh. v. 4.

Matth. i. 23. 1 Cor. i. 30.

Christianity thus considered as a spiritual Religion, and thus highly perfective of the Soul, comes represented in all the *Beauty of Holiness*, and worthy of the Son of God for its Author: In this View of it, Christ *crucified*, though to the carnal Man a *Stumbling-block*, and to the self-conceited Philosopher *Foolishness*, is, to us who believe, *the Power of God, and the Wisdom of God.* But how different a Picture of it has been drawn by several of the contending Parties of professing Christians, and how unlike the Divine Original! How has Zeal *for* Ceremonies, or Zeal *against* them, usurped the

1 Cor. i. 18. 24.

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the Place of ſubſtantial Piety! What Strife about Matters of Opinion (and oftentimes the greateſt Animoſities where the leaſt Difference,) inſtead of that *Wiſdom which is from above, and is firſt pure, then peaceable!* And (O may it never be repeated!) inſtead of Brotherly-kindneſs and Charity, what Violence and Bloodſhed, on account of Religion, have disfigured the Face of *Chriſtendom*, as if *the Wrath of Man* were the only effectual Way to *work the Righteouſneſs of God!* Good God! That thy pure and holy Religion, which was deſigned to recover in us the Divine Nature and Image, ſhould be made an Occaſion and Pretence for committing ſuch Outrages as are even a Reproach and Diſgrace to Humanity! Bleſſed *Jeſus!* That thoſe who are called by thy moſt holy Name, ſhould turn the *Goſpel of Peace* into a two-edged Sword, to wound and deſtroy!

Jam. iii. 17.

Ib. i. 20.

Are we agreed in Eſſentials? Why then do we quarrel about Circumſtantials? Are we all Members of the ſame Body? Why then do the Fellow-members war one againſt another? Are we all the Sons of one Father travelling towards the ſame Country? Why then do Brethren thus fall out by the Way?

Way? Men may profeſs what they pleaſe; and boaſt of their outward Churches all they pleaſe; but, whilſt they want a Catholic Spirit of Love, they want one neceſſary Mark of their being of the holy Catholick Church of Chriſt. It was from juſt ſuch a Narrow way of Thinking, the ſame Contractedneſs of Heart, occaſioned by placing the Whole of Religion in outward Things and little Things, that the Woman, in the Chapter from whence the Text is taken, ſaid to our Lord; *How is it that thou, being a Jew, aſkeſt Drink of me, who am a Woman of Samaria?* and it is from the ſame Principle that the ſame Spirit ſtill prevails, and that under a Religion which teaches the moſt diffuſive Benevolence and Charity, whilſt ſo many in the ſeveral Churches of *Chriſtendom* harden their Hearts againſt their Brethren as Hereticks and Reprobates, ſaying, *Here is Chriſt, or, lo! there.* Is then *Chriſt, who is over all, God bleſſed for ever,* either here or there, in that confined Senſe which theſe Men ſuppoſe? Is he, by a Majority of Voices, tied down to the Decrees of a *Pope* or Council? Limited to any particular human Eſtabliſhment? Or ſhut up within the narrower Incloſure of any Sect dividing

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dividing from it? It ought not to be ſo ſaid; for his Kingdom is of wider Extent, even in the Hearts of all Chriſtians, however outwardly diſtinguiſhed or diſperſed: And where there is true Repentance and Faith, Humility, Simplicity, and Purity of Heart; there is the Temple in which he delighteth to dwell: This is the true Communion of Saints; for they are influenced and guided by one and the ſame Holy Spirit: This is that myſtical Body, of which Chriſt is the ſupreme and ſole Head; and here only the Father is *worſhiped in Spirit and in Truth.*

But muſt there not be an Outward and Viſible, as well as an Inward and Spiritual Church? Yes, ſurely: *The King's Daughter*, as interpreted of the Church, *is* indeed *all glorious within*; glorious in *the Ornament of a meek and quiet Spirit*, and glorious in the Charms of unaffected Piety, and all Divine Graces: But then ſhe is alſo comely and decent in her Apparel; her Government and Diſcipline, her Offices and Ceremonies, have their Beauty and Fitneſs, their Uſe and Excellency: Like the *Scripture*, they are *profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Inſtruction in Righteouſneſs*;

Pſal. xlv. 14.

2 Tim. iii. 16.

Righteousness; and generally necessary for the more orderly training and building us up in the Divine Life. It is by the outward Teachings of the Word, a right and due Administration of the Sacraments, and a regular and solemn Celebration of Divine Service, under God's Blessing, that the Mind is most generally impressed with saving Truth, the Affections raised to heavenly Things, and the Work of Grace both begun and carried on in the Heart: And therefore for any one to argue from the foregoing Doctrine in such a Way as might lessen, either the Expediency or Necessity of an outward Ministry and Worship, would be grosly perverting our Saviour's Words; would be arguing against Scripture, and the constant Practice of the Church in all Ages; and would tend to exclude one Part of the human Nature from its Share in the Service of God, even those Bodies, which we are taught to *present* as *a living Sacrifice, holy, and acceptable unto God, which is our reasonable Service.* But then we are to remember, that as the Soul is of a more excellent Nature than the Body, so is the Part it bears in the great Business of Religion; and therefore whilst we *hold fast the Form,* let

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Rom. xii. 1.

let us give *the more earneſt Head*, that we alſo *worſhip the Father in Spirit and in Truth.*

Permit me to conclude with a Word of Exhortation addreſſed to you, my younger Brethren in the Miniſtry. It is indeed with an humble Senſe of my great Weakneſs and a deep Conſciouſneſs of my unworthineſs (I ſpeak not this in a feigned Humility,) that I take this Office upon me; but I hope my well-meant Zeal and Love will plead its Excuſe: But need I make any Apology for it? Is there not a Cauſe, and is it not a Time, to exhort and encourage one another, like true Yoke-fellows, in the good Work that is given us to do, when Infidels and Scoffers do the ſame in the worſt of Cauſes, nay, have ſet up *their Banners for Tokens*, and appear in open Defiance againſt *the Lord, and againſt his Anointed?* God be praiſed, we have not wanted, nor do yet want our Champions to go forth againſt theſe *uncircumciſed Philiſtines*, to chaſtiſe them with their own Weapons: Their Arguments and Objections drawn from Reaſon, Philoſophy, and human Learning, have been fully anſwered in Defences rational, philoſophical, and learned; and the Shafts which have been taken on both Sides out of the

the ſame Quiver, have proved, on theirs, but as *broken Reeds*, whilſt ours have been as *Arrows in the Hand of the Giant:* But, though ſo often confuted, we have not yet been able to put to *Silence the Ignorance of theſe fooliſh Men:* What ſtill remains wanting to this End, may your Learning and Abilities ſupply!—Go forth, and be valiant for the Truth; and may the *Enemies of the Lord be found Liars* before you!

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But true Religion hath its Adverſaries of other Denominations, with whom we have to do, as the openly Vicious and Profane, and its falſe Friends, no leſs dangerous Enemies, the ſelf-righteous Moraliſt, and the decent external Profeſſor, who ſleeps ſo ſoundly upon the ſoft Pillows of his Forms: But neither are we unprovided for theſe alſo; for we have Weapons of a Divine Temper, taken from the Armoury of God, wherewith to engage all that oppoſe the Truth, or hold the ſame in Unrighteouſneſs: Of this Number are *the Sword of the Spirit*, which is ſharp and powerful, *the Shield of Faith, and the Breaſt-plate of Righteouſneſs.* Thus appointed, my dear Brethren, we may declare boldly, not only againſt the Unrighteouſneſs, but alſo againſt the Self-righte-

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ouſneſs of Men (that abominable Idol of Pride, before which ſo many fall down, and worſhip; that filthy Cover of polluted Rags, that hinders Sinners from ſeeing the Corruption of their Nature, and the Rottenneſs of their Hearts;) and ſhall be *mighty, through God, to the pulling down the Strong-Holds* of Sin and *Satan, caſting down all Imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itſelf againſt the Knowledge of God, and bringing into Captivity every Thought to the Obedience of Chriſt.*

2 Cor. x. 4, 5.

And can it be doubted, whether the utmoſt Stretch of our Zeal and Diligence for the Glory of God, and the Good of Souls, be at this Day neceſſary, when there is ſuch a viſible Decay of true Piety, ſuch a general Falling-off from the Life and Spirit of Chriſtianity; when there is but little of the Form, and much leſs of the Power of Godlineſs to be diſcerned; and when Corruption, Self-ſeeking, and a moſt idolatrous Love for the Things of this World, have ſo deeply infected all Orders and Degrees of Men amongſt us?

If we take our Meaſures of Religion from the Goſpel of Chriſt, or the primitive Ages of the Church, how lamentable and ſhocking

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ſhocking will appear the Degeneracy of theſe Times! when that which, in the purer Days of the Goſpel, would have been looked upon as ſhort of the ordinary Standard of the Chriſtian Life, is now ſtyled being *Righteous over-much*; and when a Degree of Piety and Zeal for the Honour of Chriſt, and the Purity of his Religion, above the common Level, ſhall go near to make a Man a By-word among the People.

To a World thus ſettled on its Lees, thus ſunk in Softneſs, and wrapped up in all the Deluſions of a ſeeming Security, and falſe Peace; we are to cry aloud, and ſhew the *Folly*, *Sin*, and *Danger* of every State and Condition that comes ſhort of a *Goſpel Righteouſneſs*. A World thus beſotted, aſleep, and dead in Treſpaſſes and Sins, is to be awakened, not by ſome ſmooth Lectures on *moral Virtue*, but by ſounding in their Ears *the Terrors of the Lord:* And, to a World decking and contenting itſelf with the outward Forms of a *Phariſaical* Religion, we muſt preach the Neceſſity of being *born again*, of being *created in Chriſt Jeſus unto good Works*, and of that inward Righteouſneſs and *Holineſs*, *without which no Man ſhall ſee the Lord.*

John iii. 3. Eph. ii. 10. Heb. xii. 14.

And, as to any Difficulties and Diſcouragements that may preſent themſelves to us in the Diſcharge of this Duty, let us be *Gallio's* in theſe Things: It is Comfort and Encouragement ſufficient, that Truth is on our Side, and that *the Gates of Hell ſhall not prevail againſt it.* Let not then *Wickedneſs in high Places*, nor *the Overflowings of Ungodlineſs*, make us afraid; for He whoſe Cauſe we plead, whoſe Doctrine we preach and defend, and who hath *all Power in Heaven and in Earth*, He is, He will be *with us always, even unto the End.* Amen.

Matth. xxviii. 18.

SERMON VI.

Converſion founded on Conviction of Sin.

Preached in the Pariſh-Church of *All-Saints*, in *Northampton*, on *Sunday*, *October* 30, 1748. Publiſhed by Requeſt.

ACTS ii. 37.

Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their Heart, and ſaid unto Peter, and to the reſt of the Apoſtles, Men and Brethren, What ſhall we do?

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WE have an Account in this Chapter of three Thouſand Souls being converted to the Faith of Chriſt in one Day, by the Preaching of the Apoſtles: A glorious Beginning of the Work of God on the Hearts of Sinners! A convincing Demonſtration of the Power of the Holy Ghoſt; which now, according to our Saviour's Promiſe, deſcended upon his Embaſſadors, and rendered their Miniſtry effectual to the Converſion of many more Thouſands in all Parts of

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Acts xix. 20.

the known World: *So mightily grew the Word of God, and prevailed*, under the Conduct and Influence of this Heavenly Diſpenſer!

The miraculous Deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt being noiſed abroad throughout *Jeruſalem*, great Numbers flocked to the Temple, many of them doubtleſs led by a natural Curioſity to ſee ſo extraordinary a Sight. Now there happened to be preſent in this mixt Multitude *Jews* of Fifteen different Nations and Countries, who in Obedience to the Law of *Moſes* were come up to *Jeruſalem* to the Feaſt: For though from the Time of the *Babyloniſh* Captivity they were diſperſed almoſt over the Face of the whole Earth, yet they religiouſly kept the Paſſover at *Jeruſalem*; and many ſtayed there till after the Feaſt of *Pentecoſt*, which was inſtituted in Memory of the Delivery of the Law on *Mount Sinai*.

Peter being moved by the Holy Ghoſt, takes Occaſion from this great Concourſe of People to preach unto them Chriſt a Saviour; to prove to them from their own Scriptures, that the ſame *Jeſus* whom they had crucified was the *Meſſiah* therein foretold;

told; and to insist upon his Resurrection from the Dead, and Exaltation at the Right Hand of God. Upon which we read, that *they*, i. e. such of them as believed, *were pricked in their Hearts, and said, Men and Brethren, What shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the Name of Jesus Christ, for the Remission of Sins, and ye shall receive the Gift of the Holy Ghost. — And with many other Words did he testify and exhort.*

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Now here it is observable, *first*, How God Almighty makes use of Natural, in conjunction with Supernatural Causes, to bring about the gracious Effect of Gospel-Salvation; and by a wonderful Cast of his Providence, improves the most common, and to us seemingly accidental Occurrences, to the Manifestation of his Power and Glory. Thus, out of a mixt Multitude brought together by mere natural Curiosity, to see some new thing, no less than Three Thousand Souls were caught in the Net of the Gospel by those *Fishers of Men*, as our Saviour forenamed the Apostles; and I doubt not but many a one, who has come to Church upon no better a Principle, has

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been caught in like manner, and been *pricked to the Heart*, where he only expected Entertainment for the Ear.

2*dly.* We may learn hence, that the Lord hath appointed the Ordinance of *Preaching* as the moſt general and effectual Means of making Converts to Chriſt, even in Preference to *Miracles:* And were it poſſible to make the Calculation, I doubt not, for one Perſon proſelyted to Chriſtianity by the Miracles wrought by the Hands of the Apoſtles, Hundreds were brought over by their Preaching: Nay, it is plainly declared, that a Miracle would be ineffectual where Preaching is unprofitable. *If they will not hear Moſes and the Prophets*, (for they were preached to the *Jews* every Sabbath Day,) *neither will they be perſuaded though one roſe from the Dead.* Now, who will ſay, that the Goſpel of Chriſt, which has brought Life and Immortality to Light with clearer Evidence than was ever done before, is not as powerful a Means of Conviction as the Law and the Prophets? — Beſides, Miracles declare no Truth; they only bear Teſtimony to the Miſſion and Authority of him that works them, and ſo become

Luke xvi. 31.

the

the Seal of his Commiſſion; whereas Preaching is the Commiſſion itſelf: And therefore, the outward Evidence and Authority of Chriſtianity being once eſtabliſhed, the Work of Converſion was thenceforward to reſt upon Preaching, by a ſtanding Ordinance in the Church of Chriſt for ever. SERMON VI.

But the carnal Reaſoner, ever wiſe in his own Conceit, will be ready to aſk, If *Reading* will not do the Buſineſs full as well? Are there not as good Sermons in Print, as any that are Preached? And therefore, may we not receive as good Improvement in our Cloſets, as at Church?

I anſwer, that Reading even the beſt Books, however excellent a Means of Knowledge in its proper Place, will not do ſo well under the Neglect of Goſpel-Preaching, where People have the Opportunity of attending on it. We have no Warrant to ſet up this or that Method of Improvement, in Oppoſition to a Divine Command: Faith and Grace are the free Gifts of God, which he will beſtow upon his own Terms: And if he has been pleaſed to annex theſe to Preaching, in Conjunc-

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tion with other Ordinances, what haſt thou to reply? Follow God in his own Way, if thou hopeſt to obtain the Bleſſing.

When *Eliſha* directed *Naaman* to go and waſh in *Jordan* ſeven Times, with a Promiſe that he ſhould be cleanſed of his Leproſy, the conceited *Syrian*, like theſe Self-Willers, was for being healed his own Way, or not at all: *Are not*, ſays he, *Abana and Pharpar Rivers of Damaſcus better than all the Waters of Iſrael?* And better Rivers perhaps they might be; but yet he might have waſhed in them Seventy Times Seven, and not have found his Cure. In like Manner, the Three Thouſand that were converted on the Day of *Pentecoſt*, and the *Eunuch* that was going down to *Æthiopia* in his Chariot, might have *read* all their Lives long, without attaining to a ſaving Knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt, if he had not brought the former to hear St. *Peter*, and ſent *Philip* to preach to the latter.

2 Kings v. 12.

But to come to the particular Effect which St. *Peter's* Preaching had upon his Hearers, as expreſſed in the Verſe of the Text: *They were pricked in their Heart, and*

and ſaid unto Peter, and to the reſt of the Apoſtles, Men and Brethren, What ſhall we do?

An undiſcerning Reader may be led by two Paſſages in this Chapter, to ſuppoſe that the Compunction of Heart here ſpoken of, was owing to their having had a Hand in ſhedding the Blood of Chriſt; foraſmuch as the Apoſtle ſeems to lay this to their Charge: As in the Verſe preceding the Text, *Let all the Houſe of Iſrael know aſſuredly, that God hath made that ſame Jeſus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Chriſt.* But the Accuſation lies only againſt *them* in general, as *Jews*, and of the ſame Kindred and Religion with thoſe that had perpetrated this horrid Fact; and is not levelled at *them* in particular: For ſeveral of them came from afar, juſt in the Juncture of this Tranſaction; and were probably unacquainted with the Perſon and Doctrine of our Lord, and with the Proceedings of the Rulers againſt him at the Time of his Condemnation.

The Uſe I would make of the foregoing Obſervation is this, That the *pricking of the Heart* here ſpoken of, was not

on

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on Account of their being *Jews* only, but Sinners; and as ſuch, liable to the Wrath and Vengeance of Almighty God: And the inward Remorſe and Anguiſh of Soul which they felt at this Time, was the Power of the Spirit of God working in them, whoſe Office we are told it is, to *convince the World of Sin:* It was a Stroke of the ſame Sword which ſmote St. *Paul* to the Heart at his Converſion, when *trembling and aſtoniſhed* he firſt owned Chriſt for his Saviour, and cried out, *Lord, What wilt thou have me to do!* And which, upon the like Occaſion, pierced the *Jailer* to the Quick, when he ſo haſtily addreſſed *Paul* and *Silas* in the Priſon, with, *Sirs, What muſt I do to be ſaved?* Nor is the Spirit leſs mighty in its Operations now, than it was then: The Word of God is ſtill *quick and powerful,* and when ſent home to the Heart by an Impulſe of Divine Grace, does as fully convince, and effectually reform, as if it came out of the Mouth of St. *Peter* or St. *Paul.*

John xvi. 8.

Acts ix. 6.

Acts xvi. 30.

And here I am led to ſpeak a Word of *ſudden Converſions.* It muſt indeed be allowed, that Caſes of this Nature are not

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so frequent now, as they were in the Times of the Apostles. — They might then be necessary to answer the Design of the speedy Propagation of Christianity; and the Rapidity of the Progress which the Gospel made upon its first Entrance into the World, afforded, among many others, a strong Proof of its Divinity.—Besides, the Benefit of an early Education in the Principles of the Christian Religion, and constant Opportunities of attending on the Means of Grace, are Advantages which we enjoy, but they did not: And therefore it is, that the Business of Religion is now suffered to be carried on by more gradual Advances in the Soul, and as it were Step by Step; whereas Numbers of *them* were usually proselyted to the Faith at one Time by a single Sermon: So that *the Kingdom of God*, or *the coming of the Son of Man* in the Gospel Dispensation, might well be compared to *Lightning*, which *cometh out of the East, and shineth even unto the West*; so quickly did the Light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, coming from the Eastern, diffuse itself over the Western Parts of the World. — But tho' it

Matth. xxiv. 27.

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it be confeſſed, that the Work of God is not uſually carried on now with the ſame Diſpatch as formerly, yet to deny that there are any Inſtances of ſudden Converſions, nay, to ſay that there are not many, is to contradict the Experience of Numbers, who have been awakened and changed all at once by the Spirit of God under the Miniſtry of the Word, and ſtirred up by a wonderful and inexplicable Influence on their Souls, to turn unto the Lord.

I know that Experimental Religion has long been under much Diſcredit with us, and I am ſorry for it; for it is, among others, a ſad Argument of the great Decay of Godlineſs that is amongſt us.

A great Part of *Proteſtants* differ little from the moſt formal *Papiſts*, without knowing it; they are for going to Heaven in the Way of an outward Worſhip, and for ſacrificing to God of that which coſts them little or nothing. Forms and Ceremonies, and ſome external Works, conſiſt well enough with inward Impurity, and offer no Violence to corrupt Nature; and therefore they are well content to be religious at ſo cheap a Rate: But do not, my Brethren, thus deceive your own Souls;

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for this is building a Tower which cannot reach unto Heaven, for *its Foundation is in the Duſt:* If you would be in reality what you pretend to be, you muſt dig deeper, and lay the Foundation lower. The polluted Fountain muſt be cleanſed, and the deadly Waters thereof healed by the Salt of a true and anguiſhing Repentance. Neither will a partial Reformation make us real Chriſtians: This is only lopping off the Boughs and Branches from the Tree of Evil, which will ſprout again the more: But we muſt *lay the Axe to the Root of the Tree,* and down with it even to the Ground: We muſt repent and turn unto the Lord with deep Humiliation, that he may *make us clean Hearts, and renew a right Spirit within us*; for this is the Lord's own Work, the ſole Prerogative of that great Purifier and Reſtorer, who ſaith, *Behold, I make all Things new:* He therefore that taketh this Honour to himſelf is guilty of impious Preſumption, and would he alſo learn the Vanity of the Attempt, let him go and bid the *Æthopian* change his Skin, and the Leopard his Spots. Man's proper Powers, whether they be his Reaſon, Will, Deſires, Affections or Imaginations, can be no other than

Rev. xxi. 5.

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than the Workings of his own proper Nature, and if this be Evil *continually*, wherewithal ſhall he make himſelf good? Can the Branches change the Nature of the Root? Or can Waters iſſuing from a corrupt Fountain purify the Source from which they flow? What then is to be done? Why under a full Conviction of our Impotence, Sin and Miſery we muſt go to Him who firſt made the Heart, that He may faſhion it anew, that ſo we may become God's Workmanſhip in *Chriſt Jeſus*.

Jerem. xviii.

We read that the Prophet was ordered to go down to the Potter's Houſe to learn the Word of the Lord: And he went down; and behold, the Potter "wrought a Work "upon the Wheel, and the Veſſel that he "made of Clay was marred in the Hand "of the Potter; ſo he made it again another "Veſſel, as ſeemed good to the Potter to "make it." Now what is the Interpretation of this Parable? Was it only intended to ſet forth ſome Change in the political State of the Jewiſh Nation? Not only ſo, but it had thro' that a farther Meaning, for the whole Oeconomy of that People is a Figure of God's ſpiritual *Iſrael*, and theſe Things are an Allegory, written for more important

Inſtruction

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Inſtruction than merely to acquaint us with the Hiſtory of the *Jews*. Thou, O Man! art the Thing ſignified hereby: God made thee upright and perfect at thy firſt Formation, but Sin hath marred thee; thou art become an unclean, a ſpoiled Veſſel, and muſt, by a thorough Contrition, become a broken Veſſel, that thou mayſt be formed anew, otherwiſe thou ſhalt be caſt away as a Thing of naught: And tho' this Work be ſtrange and great indeed, yet that thou mayſt not doubt, behold, Omnipotence is thy Security: *As Clay is in the Hand of the Potter, ſo are ye in my Hand, ſaith the Lord.* The ſame Almighty Creator who ſtamp[illegible]eak Image on the human Nature at the Beginning, can reſtore it, and make that which is become a Veſſel of Diſhonour, to be a Veſſel of more abundant Honour than at firſt: But then we muſt not harden our Hearts, but let Repentance do its perfect Work on them, that they may be pliable and yielding as ſoft Clay in the Hand of the Potter; and in order to this, not only the Reluctance of the Will muſt be broken, but every high Conceit, as tho' we by our own Power could contribute any Thing to this Work, muſt be brought low; for all the

Ibid.

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the Strivings of corrupt Nature, every Effort of Self, however ſpecioufly coloured, are only ſo many Hindrances to the divine Operations: Grace alone is ſufficient for its own Work, nor will God ſhare the Honour with Man, as tho' He needed a Helper in regenerating a Soul any more than He did in the firſt Creation of it: And therefore to fit and prepare us for this great Change by a kind of Annihilation of Self, his Spirit ſtriveth with Man thro' the Means of humbling Convictions, that ſo every Power of his Nature, and every Thought of his Heart may be brought to the Obedience of *Chriſt*.

But Sorrow and Sadneſs are Things ſo contrary to the Bent of our Nature, and lie ſo croſs to every Appetite and Inclination of Fleſh and Blood, that few People can bear to hear of *Mourning* and *Mortification* in Religion. We are called *the Troublers of Iſrael*, as *Ahab* ſtiled *Elijah*, when we inſiſt upon theſe Doctrines; or elſe are reproached with *bringing an evil Report upon the good Land*, by giving ſuch a diſcouraging Repreſentation of it: But this we cannot help; for we muſt take Human Nature as we find it, and Religion

as

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as we find it; and be content with such Remedies for our Misery, as Sin has made necessary.

Had Man continued in his first Estate, and all the Sons and Daughters of *Adam* preserved their Innocence; in that Case, to talk of Sorrow would have been bringing strange Things to their Ears, for nothing but *the Voice of Joy* would have been known *in the Dwellings of the Righteous:* But this is not the Case with us now; for Sin has deeply infected our Nature; now Sin is the Parent of Sorrow, and Evangelical Sorrow a sovereign Means of its Cure.— Say not then, *Speak unto us smooth Things,* and speak them *smoothly*; for we must suit our Discourses to your Needs, and not to your Likings; and therefore are frequently called upon in Duty to speak sharp Things, and to speak them sharply, if so by any Means the Word may *prick you to the Heart,* and bring you to cry out, *What shall we do to be saved?*

Isai. xxx. 10.

But it may be asked here, Why God Almighty hath made the Burden of Sin so heavy, and the Work of Conversion so piercing to the Soul of the Penitent? Something has been already offered upon this

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Head, but to ſatisfy ſo important an Enquiry more fully, let it be obſerved,

Firſt, That he doth this in Grace and Goodneſs to divorce our Hearts from Sin; by giving us a feeling Senſe of the Bitterneſs and Evil that is in it. — All the Arguments and Perſuaſions in the World would be inſufficient to prevail with us to forſake our ſinful Luſts and wicked Ways, if we were not to ſmart for them, if we were not to be humbled under the Remembrance of them, and to be terrified at the Sight of that Defilement which they have brought upon the Soul, and its Danger on that Account.

Secondly, This painful Senſe of Sin and its Malignity brings us to ſee our Need of a Saviour, and teaches us to prize the Benefit of our Redemption by his Blood. People may talk of Chriſt with ſeeming Reverence, and profeſs to believe in him with a Shew of Sincerity, but he is only ſweet and amiable to the Sin-diſtreſſed Soul: As Liberty to the Captive, and Sight to the Blind, ſo is Chriſt truly precious to the labouring and heavy laden Penitent: Grace then truly appears Grace, when Sin appears to be Sin — Whilſt we think ourſelves in Safety, and all to be well with us, in a vain

Confidence of its own Sufficiency the Heart of Man is apt to cry out, as the Devils did, *What have I to do with thee, Jesus!* But when the Soul is made truly sensible of its Sin and Misery, and finds itself sinking in the deep Waters, it then flieth unto *Jesus* for Help, and with *Peter* crieth out, *Lord save me, or I perish!*

Thirdly, Inward Suffering and Compunction on Account of Sin disposes the Heart for Grace, and makes it both receptive and retentive of its Impressions: It breaks up the fallow Ground, and mollifies the stony Heart, and gives free Access to the Word of the Lord: On a Soil thus prepared the Dew of Heavenly Grace and Instruction descends as Rain into a Fleece of Wool.

What is the Reason that the Word preached is attended with so little Profit to the Souls of many, insomuch that neither the Promises nor the Threatnings, neither the Mercies nor the Judgments of the Lord, as set forth by us, have any more Effect upon such to bring them nearer to God, than the Whistling of the Wind? Or if our Sermons are listened to, and perhaps the Style or Matter of them commended,

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Ezek. xxxiii. 32.

yet *they are unto them but as a lovely Song of one that hath a pleaſant Voice, and can play well on an Inſtrument; for they hear the Words, but do them not.* What, I ſay, is the Reaſon of this, but becauſe you have hardened your Hearts as Flints, ſo that the keeneſt Arrows from the Quiver, though aimed aright, cannot pierce them: The Word, like the Seed that fell upon ſtony Ground, gains no Admittance into them; and as it taketh no Root downward, ſo neither can it bring forth Fruit upward: Your Conſciences are yet unawakened; you are yet in a State of Spiritual Death: May the God of Strength ſupply the Defect of his Ordinances, and break the Gates of Braſs, and ſmite the Bars of Iron aſunder, that *Jeſus* may enter into his Temple, and dwell there!

But perhaps, there are other Reaſons that come in for a ſhare in the Cauſe of our Unſucceſsfulneſs. — You ſee, that we are Men of like Paſſions and Infirmities with yourſelves, and have not yet attained to that Pitch of Perfection which we preach to others: But let not that prejudice you againſt the Means of your own Perfection: We feel and lament our Weakneſs and Unworthineſs,

and

and we confeſs our great Need of Forgiveneſs at the hands of God, and our Need of your Prayers to God for us: But yet to ſuch as we are is a Diſpenſation committed, and *Wo be to us, if we preach not the Goſpel.* And tho' we have *this Treaſure in earthen Veſſels*, yet deſpiſe not the Riches of the former on account of the Meanneſs of the latter. You cannot have *Angels* for your Miniſters; and if you could, the Matter, perhaps, would not be ſo much mended as you ſuppoſe; for it is not the Inſtrument, but the Power and Bleſſing of God going along with it that muſt affect your Converſion: Beſides, thoſe pure and ſpotleſs Beings, as they have no Defilement in their Nature, and experience no Corruption in their Hearts, ſo neither could they ſpeak ſo feelingly and affectingly to yours: This however is certain, that tho' *they are miniſtring Spirits, ſent forth to miniſter for them who ſhall be Heirs of Salvation*, yet *unto us*, and not unto them, *is committed the Miniſtry of Reconciliation*; and accordingly, tho' an Angel was ſent from Heaven to *Cornelius* to comfort him, yet he was directed to ſend for *Peter*, to hear the Word of God at his Mouth. *Now then*, though weak and unworthy, yet we are

1 Cor. ix. 16.

2 Cor. iv. 7.

Heb. i. 14.

2 Cor. v. 18.

Acts x. 5, 6.

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2 Cor. v. 20.

Embaſſadors for Chriſt, as though God did beſeech you by us; we pray you therefore *in Chriſt's ſtead, be ye reconciled to God.*

But, *Laſtly*, Perhaps (for we muſt be content to bear Reproach,) ſome of you will ſay, that by this Craft we have our Wealth, and that it is our Profeſſion and Livelihood to ſay theſe Things, though we believe them not ourſelves: But do not, my Brethren, go on by the Help of ſtudied Objections to reject the Counſel of God againſt yourſelves, and to harden your Hearts in Unbelief: For *we ſpeak that we do know, and teſtify that we have felt*; for our Faith is not founded on mere moral Perſuaſion, but on inward Conviction, and ſupported by Reaſon, by Scripture, by Experience.

That none enter into the *Prieſt's Office* nor continue in it, for the Sake of *Bread*, I cannot ſay: But this I am bold to ſay, that there are many amongſt us who would preach the ſame Truths, and with the ſame Earneſtneſs, though you were to give them Stones inſtead of Bread.

I ſhall now conclude with ſuch an *Application*, as may ſuit the two different Characters of my Hearers, *viz.* thoſe who have been

been *pricked to the Heart*, and those who have not. SERMON VI.

And *first*, to those who were never yet *pricked to the Heart*, and thereby led to cry out, *What must we do to be saved?* And whereas *the Word of God* has been *quick and powerful, and sharper than any two edged Sword* to others, it has not had one Edge for them; to whom the Scriptures are but as a sealed Book, or a Tale that is told; Preaching but as sounding Brass; receiving the Sacrament nothing better than eating Bread and drinking Wine; and the Whole of Religious Worship but a Set of dull dry Forms, without Spirit and without Life: Who are diligent Seekers after the Things of this Life, constant Enquirers, What shall we do to be Rich? What shall we do to gain the Favour of Men, or to *make Provision for the Flesh, to fulfil the Lusts thereof?* — But, What shall we do to obtain the Pardon of our Sins? What shall we do to gain an Interest in Christ, and that our Lot may be among the Saints? These are Interrogatories, so faintly, if at all, insisted on, as plainly shews, that the Care of their Souls is the least of their Concern. Heb. iv. 12.

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Ezek. xiii. 10.

If any ſuch be here, as I fear there are in ſo great a Congregation, How ſhall I addreſs you? Shall I *ſpeak ſmooth Things*, and *daub with untempered Mortar?* Shall I *ſew Pillows* to your Arms, that ſo you may ſleep on ſecurely? God forbid that I ſhould be thus unfaithful to my Truſt, and ſuch an Enemy to your Souls! Bear then with my Plainneſs, whilſt I tell you what I think of you; for though my Heart is full of Tenderneſs and Pity for you, yet my Voice muſt be a *Voice of Terror* to you. I think then, be you never ſo rich, or great, or jocund, that you *are of all Men moſt miſerable*; and I would not be in your Condition for Ten Thouſand Worlds; for if you die in your unconverted State, there is not a ſingle Text in Scripture that gives you Hopes of eſcaping *the Damnation of Hell.* How can you cloſe your Eyes to Sleep, when you know not but you may open them in everlaſting Burnings? How can you walk the Streets without Fear, when even a Tile falling from a Houſe may for ever ſeparate you from all Poſſibility of working out your own Salvation? for all Nature, the Elements, and every Creature, is in a State of Hoſtility with the Man that lives

lives at Enmity with God. Flee then for your Lives, O Sinners, flee for your Souls. —But whither shall you flee? for the horrible Pit openeth wide her Mouth before you; the Avenger of Blood pursues you at your Heels, and the Terrors of the Lord are on your Right Hand and on your Left. —But yet there is a Way to escape: Flee to the Lord *Jesus Christ*, in the lively Exercise of Repentance and Faith, and He *will* deliver you; for *He hath the Keys of Hell and of Death, and shutteth and no Man openeth.* He is the true City of Refuge from the Avenger of Blood; and in Him God is no longer a *consuming Fire*, but disarmed of his Terrors; for *in Christ* He is *a reconciled God*, full of Peace and Love.

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Rev. i. 18. iii. 7.

And now, may this *Foolishness of Preaching* be unto you a Means of Spiritual Wisdom! May the Lord give Power to the Word of his Grace, and send it home with a Divine Efficacy to your Hearts, that you may be pricked to the Quick, and with a sollicitous Earnestness about Soul-Concerns, cry out *What shall we do to be saved?* May *the strong Man of Sin* now in Possession of the House, and *whose Goods are in Peace*, have his Foundations shaken, and the Walls

Luke ix. 21.

wherein

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wherein he truſted be as a tottering Fence! May the *Devil* be *caſt out*, though it be with rending and tearing! And may that Scripture be fulfilled in you: *Ye were without Chriſt, being Aliens from the Commonwealth of Iſrael, and Strangers from the Covenant of Promiſe, having no Hope, and without God in the World: but now in Chriſt Jeſus, ye who ſome time were far off, are made nigh by the Blood of Chriſt.*

Eph. ii. 12, 13.

I ſhall conclude with a Word to thoſe, who have felt the Power of Goſpel Ordinances, ſent home to their Hearts by the Holy Spirit, to convince them of Sin; and who come to Chriſt *labouring and heavy laden* under the Remembrance and Burden of it, crying out *Lord, What ſhall we do to inherit Eternal Life?* And now, my Brethren, to ſuch as you are, I heartily bid *God ſpeed*, and wiſh you *good Luck in the Name of the Lord.* You have turned your Backs on Sin and the World, and ſet your Faces Heavenward: Go on and proſper, for the promiſed Land is in full View before you; and though the Entrance into it be ſomewhat difficult, yet be not diſmayed, neither afraid of the *Canaanite*, nor yet of the Swellings of *Jordan*; for the Waters ſhall

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ſhall divide that you may paſs over in Safety, and under the Command and Conduct of your ſpiritual *Joſhua*, even the Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*, you ſhall ſhortly ſee the victorious Banner of the Croſs diſplayed on the Battlements of *Jericho*. Convictions for Sin are indeed troubleſome, but Inſenſibility in Sin is infinitely dangerous: A wounded Conſcience is painful, but a benumbed and hardened Conſcience is deſtructive: Bear then the Chaſtiſement of the Lord, not only with Patience, but Thankfulneſs; *for whom the Lord loveth he ſo chaſteneth, and ſcourgeth every Son whom he receiveth:* So ſhall your *Sickneſs be not unto Death, but for the Glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified thereby.*

Heb. xii. 6.

John xi. 4.

And now, my dear Brethren, I have delivered to you a Meſſage of Life and Death; and how am I pained for you, leſt you ſhould chuſe amiſs? But God forbid that you ſhould chuſe Deſtruction, and refuſe Converſion! May He direct you in your Choice, and ſupply the Defects of his Meſſengers by the All-powerful Workings of his Spirit, that you may be *pricked in your Hearts*, and cry, *What ſhall we do to be ſaved?*

And

And may the God of Heaven incline his Ear unto your Cry, and help you, when you call upon him! May the Lord *Jeſus Chriſt* waſh away your Sins with his moſt precious Blood! and may you be perfected through the Sanctification of the Holy Ghoſt, that you may obtain the eternal Salvation of your Souls! Even ſo grant, Lord *Jeſus*, Amen and *Amen.*

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SERMON

Preach'd in the

Pariſh-Church of *All-Saints* in *Northampton*,

BEFORE THE

PRESIDENT and GOVERNORS

OF THE

County INFIRMARY

For Sick and Lame POOR,

AT THE

ANNIVERSARY MEETING

ON

MONDAY, September 24, 1750.

At the Anniverſary Meeting of the Governors and Subſcribers to the COUNTY INFIRMARY at *Northampton*, on *Monday*, *Sept.* 24, 1750.

AGREED, *That their Thanks be given to the Rev. Mr.* HARTLEY, *for his* SERMON *preached this Day before Them*; *and that He be deſired to deliver a Copy of the ſame to the* SOCIETY, *to be printed immediately.*

Northampton, *Preſident.*

TO

The Moſt Noble

CHARLES, Duke of GRAFTON,

GRAND VISITOR;

The Right Honourable

JAMES, Earl of *Northampton*,

PERPETUAL PRESIDENT;

The Right Reverend

JOHN, Lord Biſhop of *Peterborough*,

DIOCESAN;

AND

The Reſt of the GOVERNORS of the COUNTY-INFIRMARY at *Northampton*;

This SERMON

Is reſpectfully inſcrib'd by

Their humble Servant,

Winwick,
Sept. 25, 1750.

THOMAS HARTLEY.

SERMON VII.

1 Cor. xii. 31.

—And yet ſhew I unto you a more excellent Way.

THESE Words are a kind of connecting Clauſe bringing into one View of Compariſon the Subjects of this and the following Chapter: In the former the Apoſtle enumerates ſome of thoſe extraordinary Gifts which were beſtowed on the Church in its primitive State, as the Working of Miracles, Propheſy, Diſcerning of Spirits, Diverſities of Tongues, with ſome others, which, tho' different in kind and Operation, yet, he tells the *Corinthians*, were Vouchſafements of one and the ſame Spirit, various Adminiſtrations under the ſame Lord and Head of the Church, and therefore to be employed with a ſingle Eye

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Eph. iv. 12.

to his Glory, and for the Profit of his Members, *for the perfecting of the Saints, for the Work of the Miniſtry, for the edifying of the Body of Chriſt.* And then, by aptly pointing out the Analogy betwixt Chriſt's myſtical Body and the Body natural, he infers, from the mutual Relation and Dependence of the ſeveral Parts and Members thereof, the Neceſſity of friendly Agreement and true Fellowſhip, of perfect Harmony and Union amongſt all the Individuals of the Church, whatever Difference there might be in their Gifts and Endowments reſpectively; that thoſe who were diſtinguiſhed with the higheſt and moſt honourable Allotments ought not, upon that Account, to be high-minded, and lord it over ſuch of their Brethren as had received leſs; nor theſe on the other hand repine, becauſe of the Inferiority of their Office, as tho' they were leſs uſeful or neceſſary in the Oeconomy of the Church: But that, as they had received all of the ſame Spirit, and were joined together in one Body, ſo they ſhould jointly contribute their Supplies to the common Welfare of the Whole, and, as Fellow-Members, cheriſh the ſame Care and affectionate Regard one for another, that ſo there might be no

Schiſm

Schiſm in the Body. He concludes this Subject with exhorting them to *covet earneſtly the beſt Gifts*, not ſuch as would bring moſt Honour to their Perſons, but ſuch as might beſt advance the Glory of God, ſuch as were moſt needful for the converting of Sinners, or the edifying of their Brethren, and ſuch as were beſt ſuited to their Inſtrumentality and Uſefulneſs in the Management of them: *And yet*, ſays he, *ſhew I unto you a more excellent Way*, i. e. Great and glorious as ſuch ſupernatural Endowments may appear in the Eyes of Men, whatever Honour they may reflect on the Chriſtian Religion, however cogent a Proof they are of its Divinity, yet declare I unto you that which is ſtill a higher Recommendation of it, more acceptable to God, more profitable to Man—and then he goes on — *Tho' I ſpeak with the Tongues of Men and of Angels, and have not Charity, I am become as ſounding Braſs or a tinkling Cymbal; and tho' I have the Gift of Prophecy, and underſtand all Myſteries and all Knowledge; and tho' I have all Faith, ſo that I could remove Mountains, and have not Charity, I am nothing:* And, ſo proceeds to the End of the following Chapter, ſhewing how unavailable to Sal-

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vation the Gifts of the Spirit are without the Grace of the Spirit, deſcribing its many excellent Properties, and concluding with that well-known Preference—*Now abideth Faith, Hope, Charity, theſe three; but the greateſt of theſe is Charity*; Greateſt, if we reſpect the Dignity of its Nature, for however excellent Things are ſpoken of FAITH, yet it is only the Handmaid to *Love*; HOPE, however glorious and animating, comforts us only with the Expectation of good Things, but CHARITY is a preſent Earneſt of the good Things themſelves; and greateſt it is likewiſe, if we reſpect its Permanency; for *Faith* ſhall be ſwallowed up in Viſion, and *Hope* will terminate in Fruition, *(for when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part ſhall be done away)* but *Charity* will be the Enjoyment itſelf in its fulleſt Accompliſhment; for where all is *Love*, there all is Joy and Peace.—In a word, CHARITY aſſimilates us to Angels, unites us to God, and endureth for ever—*Charity never faileth.*

In the Progreſs of this Diſcourſe I ſhall conſider this Divine Grace of CHARITY in its *largeſt* Extent, as it takes in our Love to God and Man, and ſo becomes the End of

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the Commandment, the fulfilling of the Law in the Duties of *both* Tables; for our Lord has pronounced the Principle to be alike in both, tho' it differ in the Object and Exercise of it: And, in speaking to the *second* Branch of this Duty, I shall consider it with a particular Reference to the Occasion of our present Meeting,

To begin with our Love of God, that *first and great Commandment*, the chief End and Happiness of Man, the Fountain of the Divine Life in the Soul, — from which, as its proper Source, streams forth true Christian Philanthropy; and from which, as its sanctifying Principle, every Religious Act and Temper derives its Beauty and Excellence.

Now let it be observed, that our Love of God rises in Proportion to the Manifestation of his Love to us, * and consequently must

1 John iv. 19.

* This is not meant to exclude or lessen any other Motives to the Love of God, particularly that which proceeds from the Consideration of the Excellencies and Perfections of the Divine Nature, concerning which many Persons of eminent Piety have spoken such exalted Things: But, thro' the prevailing Dulness and Corruption of Man's Nature, we find, that Arguments drawn from this Source are not of such general Use as could be wished; and that their Influence extends little farther than to Persons fitted by great Elevation of Spirit, and Abstractedness of Thought, (and, I may add

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aſcend higher under the Chriſtian Diſpenſation than it poſſibly could under any other; for herein is the Love of God ſuperlatively diſplayed, in that *He gave his only begotten Son, that whoſoever believeth in Him ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting Life.* And here it will be needful to glance at the State of Religion in the World before the Coming of *Chriſt*, as it ſtood divided into Heathens and *Jews:* As to the former, how does their groſs Idolatry, their wretched Superſtitions, and their unworthy Conceptions of the Divine Nature, argue their Ignorance in the firſt Elements of Natural Religion! But take the wiſeſt, take the Beſt amongſt them; I give you *Socrates*, I give you *Plato*, I give you *Archimedes*, Great Names, and of good Report! And yet, poor Heathens, ſhall we more admire that you went ſo far, or that you came ſo ſhort in what moſt concerned you to know. Say, *Socrates*, that thou believedſt in one God: yet thou kneweſt Him not (nor was it thy Fault) as a reconciled God in the Son of his Love, and, as ſuch, the Father

John xiii. 16.

too, by great Purity of Heart) for Divine Contemplations: And even theſe, it muſt be allowed, can no where take ſuch amiable and animating Views of the Glory of God, as in the Face of *Jeſus Chriſt*.

of

of Mercies, and God of all Comfort. Say, *Plato*, juſtly admired Heathen, that the Soul's Immortality was not hid from thee; yet the Way to a happy Immortality the Light of Nature could not teach thee. Say, laſtly, *Archimedes*, Did the Heavens declare to thee the Glory of God? yet that Man was an Heir of Glory they declared not: Did the Firmament ſhew forth his Handy-work as its Creator? yet no Star therein could lead thee to *Chriſt*, the Power of God unto Salvation, as thy Redeemer. —Here, Philoſopher, thy Perſpective failed thee, ſuch Knowledge was too high for thee; a God Incarnate uniting our Nature to Himſelf, that we might become the Sons of God, is an Abyſs of Wonders which thy Line fathomed not; thou couldſt not attain unto this Wiſdom neither in the Height above, nor in the Depth beneath: It is higher than the Heaven, what couldſt thou do; deeper than Hell, what couldſt thou know? The Meaſure of ſuch Love is longer than the Earth, and broader than the Sea. Conclude we then, that the wiſeſt and beſt Heathens, for want of Revelation, could not attain to any Degree of Divine Love comparable to the Meaſure of the Chriſtian,

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being unacquainted with the Extent of God's Love to Man in his moſt important Intereſt. Beſides, being Strangers to the Doctrine of the Fall, they could not explain the Evil they ſaw, both in the natural and moral World *, in any juſt Conſiſtency with the Divine Wiſdom and Goodneſs: And this rendered their Conceptions and Reaſonings touching the Attributes and Providence of God perplexed and dark; and therefore we the leſs wonder that the Worſhip of the moſt knowing among them was little better than erecting an Altar *To the unknown God.*

To the *Jews* indeed God vouchſafed a Diſcovery of his Nature and Will, and gave them a Law for their Directory to lead them to Himſelf, for the End of the Commandment was Love; but they attained not to the End of the Commandment, and ſo it became to them a killing Letter, pronouncing Death on their Diſobedience, whilſt it gave them

Gal. iii. 10. 2 Cor. iii. 6.

* Their Ignorance of this, probably, firſt gave Riſe to the Suppoſition of a Duality of Gods, as held by ſome of the moſt antient Philoſophers in their Doctrine of the two Principles, the one of Good, the other of Evil. The former was called by the Perſian Magi *Oromaſdes*; the latter, *Arimanius*. This abſurd Error, under ſome Alterations and Improvements, was afterwards adapted by the *Manichæans* in the third Century. *See* Bayle's *Dict. Art.* MANICHÆANS. *See alſo* Theol. Ancienne, *par* Chev. RAMSAY.

not

not Grace and Strength for Performance, for such Communication belonged to a higher Diſpenſation, even a ſpiritual one; and therefore however glorious the Miniſtration of Condemnation was in the Promulgation of the Law, and in the awful Diſplay of God's Power and Majeſty, yet it was to be done away when He who was the End of the Law for Righteouſneſs ſhould come, as having no comparative Glory in reſpect of that Miniſtration which ſo far excelleth in Glory; when God's Juſtice ſhould give Place to his Goodneſs, and Mercy rejoice againſt Judgment.—Hence we may ſee the great need there was of Goſpel Salvation for the Recovery of fallen Man, in that no outward Rule of Action*, tho' of

2 Cor. iii. 10, & ſeq.

* The Energy of Divine Grace, as a ſanctifying Principle in the Heart, made no Part nor Promiſe of the Moſaic Diſpenſation, ſo that Man's Nature could not be reformed by it; and therefore, the Prophets and holy Men under the Law were not ſaved by the Law, but by the Regenerating Spirit of *Chriſt* working in them, and ſpeaking thro' them. Salvation was then the ſame free Gift, and by the ſame free Grace, thro' Faith, as now, tho' not revealed in the Way of a publick Diſpenſation till afterwards, when that better Covenant took Place, whoſe diſtinguiſhing Property and Privilege it ſhould be, with reſpect to all the Faithful under it, that the Divine Laws ſhould be within them, as a powerful living Principle of Love and Obedience,—*not written in Tables of Stone, but in the fleſhly Tables of the Heart, with the Spirit of the Living God.* Jer. xxxi. 33. 2 Cor. iii. 3. Heb. x. 16.

Divine

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Divine Appointment, could lead him to God in the Way of acceptable Love and Obedience, becauſe of the Weakneſs of the Fleſh in its State of natural Corruption:

Gal.iii.21. *If there had been a Law given which could have given Life, verily Righteouſneſs ſhould have been by the Law.*

And now we are led to that wonderful Myſtery of our Redemption, God manifeſt in the Fleſh to deſtroy the Works of the Devil, even all that Sin and Satan had done in our fallen Nature. In this Conſolation of *Iſrael* we have the Subſtance of all Types and Shadows, the Accompliſhment of all Promiſes and Prophecies, and the Fulfilling of the Law for all them that believe to the Saving of the Soul. *God, who at ſundry Times, and in divers Manners, ſpake in Time paſt unto the Fathers by the Prophets, hath in theſe laſt Days ſpoken unto us by his Son.*—And what was the Meſſage? It was Love; for, ſpeaking of all them that received Him, he ſaith, *I have declared unto them thy Name, and will declare it, that the Love wherewith thou haſt loved me may be in them, and I in them.* Now, in an Evangelical Senſe, God's Name is Love, for He *was in Chriſt*

Heb.i.1,2.

John xvii. 26.

2 Cor. v. 19.

Chriſt reconciling the World unto Himſelf: And therefore with great Propriety does the Goſpel ſignify *Glad Tidings.*

And as in the Proceſs of our Redemption by *Jeſus Chriſt* we behold one great continued Myſtery of Love, ſo, as was the Work ſuch alſo was the End of it, *viz.* to bring back Man to the Love of God; for as in his Departure from this conſiſted his Sin and Ruin, ſo in his Return to it lay the only poſſible Means of his Recovery. To this End *Chriſt* lived a perfect Pattern of Divine Love, teaching us thereby to follow his Steps: To this end He both preached and practiſed Poverty of Spirit and Self Denial, by ſuch inſtructive Leſſons, to caution us againſt placing a fancied Happineſs in thoſe Poſſeſſions and Gratifications which only ſerve to alienate our Affections from Him who is the ſole Fountain of true Felicity: And to the end that He might bring about a twofold Reconciliation between an offended God and ſinful Man, He laid down his Life, ſlaying, by the atoning Blood of his Croſs, the Enmity betwixt them; and now continues, under the perfecting Diſpenſation of his Spirit, to ſhed abroad the Love of God in our Hearts, and to give us Power to become

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come the Sons of God, by a Participation of the Divine Nature.

Where is the Wiſe, where is the Diſputer of this World, who go about to rob the *Chriſtian* of his beſt Hope, this Hope full of Immortality, and to ſap the ſureſt Foundation of our Love to God, by labouring to undermine our Faith in his beſt Love to us? But know, Unbeliever, that however *Chriſt* crucified may be to the carnal Heart a Stumbling-block, and to the conceited Wiſdom of the proud Diſputer Fooliſhneſs, yet to us who believe He is *the Power of God, and the Wiſdom of God.* Look up, O *Chriſtian*, and meditate on the Sufferings of thy bleeding, dying Saviour, think on thy Sins which pierced his ſacred Side, on the Death of the Croſs he endured to deliver thee from eternal Death, and on the Shame He deſpiſed to advance thee to Glory; and when thou thinkeſt thereon, refrain, if thou canſt, from owning, that as no Sorrow was ever like his Sorrow, ſo no Love ever equalled his Love. How comes it in general that we are ſo little affected with theſe Views of his Redeeming Love? Is it not becauſe our Hearts are more immoveable than the Earth which quaked, more impenetrable than the Rocks

Rocks which rent at his Paſſion? Why burn they not within us? Why kindle they not into Flames of holy Gratitude and devout Affection whilſt we open the Scriptures and preach unto you *Jeſus?* Is it not, O ſad Conſideration! becauſe we have given ſo much of them to the World, to the Creatures, and to our Luſts, and therefore the Love of the Father and of the Son has no Place in many of us.—Let us then caſt out our Idols, and put away the curſed Thing that ſeparates betwixt our Saviour and our Souls, and then we ſhall know what the Love of God meaneth.—*Give me thy Heart* is the Voice of the Lord to every Son and Daughter of *Adam*; and if we will but conſent to the Conveyance, He will repleniſh them with his Love and the Graces of his Spirit, and they ſhall become *Temples of the living God:* In his Light ſhall we ſee Light; and in his Love ſhall we feel Love: For this excellent Grace of CHARITY is not the genuine Offſpring of an apoſtate Spirit, but a pure Emanation of the Divinity in our Souls reflected back upon its Source.

Luke xvi. 13.

1 John ii. 15.

Prov. xxiii. 26.

1 Cor. iii. 16. and 2 Cor. vi. 16.

But let us paſs from the *firſt* to the *ſecond* Table; for *this Commandment have we, that*

1 John iv. 21.

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that he who loveth God, love his Brother alſo.

Now this Branch of *Charity* is high in Rank and Eminence among the Duties of the Chriſtian Life, and like unto the firſt. It was our Lord's Command to his Diſciples more than once, that they ſhould love one another; nay, He makes it a Badge of their Diſcipleſhip: It is laid down as a neceſſary Appendage of our Love to God; a Mark of his dwelling in us; a Teſt of true Faith: To which we may add, that it is the very Spirit that animates all the relative Duties, giving them Life, Direction and Uniformity: It is the Spring of Truth in all our Words, and the Baſis of Juſtice in all our Dealings: It regulates our Obedience, ſanctifies our Alms, and ennobles every Social Virtue: It is ſo neceſſary to the Comfort and Well-being of Society, that, where the Principle is wanting, to practice the very Appearance of it is conſidered as a valuable Part of Education, and Politeneſs is made the Subſtitute of Benevolence; ſo eſtimable is that Virtue, whoſe very Counterfeit the World holds reſpectable. But, if we mean to be *Chriſtians* indeed, our *Love* muſt be *without*

Matth. xxii. 39.

John xiii. 34. and xv. 12. xiii. 35. 1 John. iv. 21. Ib. iv. 12. Gal. v. 6.

without Diſſimulation: The bare Profeſſion of it will neither profit ourſelves nor others; for a feigned Virtue, as it is without Power and Solidity, ſo it muſt want Effect and Conſiſtency. SERMON VII. Rom. xii. 19.

Let us now, my Brethren, bring ourſelves to this Teſt; let us meaſure ourſelves by this Standard: The one true Church of *Chriſt* is the Communion of Saints, and *Charity* is the Life and Soul of it: Is then the Love of God ſhed abroad in our Hearts, and have we fervent *Charity* among ourſelves? For, be it known of a Truth, that as much as we poſſeſs of this Heavenly Treaſure, ſo much have we of *Chriſtianity*, and no more; and that without it all Zeal for Religion is but Contention, all Modes of Worſhip but Formality, and all Orthodoxy but vain Opinion.

Charity, or Love to our Neighbour, may objectively be conſidered under this threefold Diſtinction; the Love of Affection, the Love of Benevolence, and the Love of Beneficence.

By the firſt I mean not that inſtinctive Principle of Tenderneſs which we feel in ourſelves towards our Deſcendants and near Relatives, for this has its Ground in Nature, and

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and therefore is in no wise peculiar to the Christian Dispensation, tho' capable of receiving all Improvements from it: Nor yet do I mean those Engagements of Friendship which we see in the World, arising from Similitude of natural Temper, or Manners, Combination of Interest, or Sameness of Pursuits; for such Union often binds together the Carnal and Unconverted: But by *Charity* of Affection here, I understand that Gospel Disposition which St. *John* lays down as one Evidence of our renewed State, where he says, *We know that we have passed from Death unto Life, because we love the Brethren:* Now such are all they who bear the Impress of the Divine Image on their Souls, and are led by the Spirit of God to set their Affections on Things above, and to order their Lives and Conversation as becometh the Gospel of *Christ:* And this is a powerful and constraining Love, nay, stronger than Death itself; for such are willing, if need be, to lay down their Lives for the Brethren: Such was the Love of the Primitive *Christians* even to a Proverb, and the same will be the Love of all true *Christians* to the End of the World; for however they are divided or dispersed through-

1 John iii. 14.

throughout the whole Earth among the ſeveral *outward* Churches, yet they are all of one Heart and one Mind in the Eſſence of Faith and Things pertaining to God; and they are of one Communion, for they have been all made to drink into one Spirit: They are myſtical Members under one Head, Fellow-Heirs of the ſame Promiſes, Fellow-Travellers to the ſame Heavenly City, and will in the End form one glorious Church Triumphant in the everlaſting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour *Jeſus Chriſt*. In a word, this Evangelical Temper is nothing leſs than a Divine Principle in the Soul communicating with the ſame in our Brethren, and ſo uniting all, that are Partakers of it, in a holy Fellowſhip of ſuch Love, Joy, and Peace, as paſſeth the Underſtanding of *all other* Men.

But as we are to love the Brotherhood, *Chriſt's* faithful Servants, with a diſtinguiſhed and peculiar Affection; ſo,

Secondly, We are to honour ALL Men with the Love of a benevolent Reſpect; for the ſame Charity that connects in cloſe Union thoſe who are Fellow-Citizens with the Saints and of the Houſhold of God,

extends its Benignity to all ſuch as, tho' Members of the viſible Church, are yet Aliens from the ſpiritual Commonwealth of *Iſrael*, and Strangers from the Covenants of Promiſe; nay, it enlarges itſelf to all Mankind without Exception; for one Property belonging to it is, that it hopeth all Things, and therefore it waiteth patiently, looking for the Time when it may pleaſe God to bring them nigh by the Blood of *Chriſt*, who are now afar off: Accordingly, the *charitable Chriſtian* labours for the Converſion of his Brethren in the Fleſh; prays for thoſe that pray not for themſelves; ſtudies to convince the Unbelieving, and to reclaim the Erroneous; and thinks nothing too much to do for thoſe Souls for which *Chriſt* died, if ſo be that by any Means he may become an Inſtrument of gaining ſome: Nay, tho' his Good be undeſervedly evil-ſpoken of, and when he ſpeaketh to them of Peace, their Souls everlaſting Peace, they make themſelves ready for Battle, and requite him Evil for his Good-will; yet even ſo, that *Charity*, which ſuffereth long and is kind, endureth all Things, even Reproach and Perſecution, with Patience and Forgiveneſs, *not rendering Evil for Evil,*

nor Railing for Railing, but contrariwiſe Bleſſing. Thus is *Charity* kind to thoſe that hate and perſecute us, and ſo ſtands differenced from that Species of Philanthropy which riſes no higher than a bare Exchange of Good-Will and good Offices, and ought, therefore, to be conſidered rather as a virtuous Kind of Traffick than a Goſpel Grace.

Luke vi. 22.

I come, *thirdly*, to ſpeak of *Charity* under View of Beneficence to the Poor; and in this Light we behold it in its Fruits, as the Principle called forth into Act, and which may therefore properly be ſtyled the Expreſſion or Evidence of our *Charity*, as it reſpects the temporal Wants of our needy Brethren.

And here let it be obſerved, that as true *Charity* always produces this Effect to the Extent of our Power, ſo it is this inward Diſpoſition that dignifies and conſecrates the outward Act: For as there may be a miſtaken Zeal for Religion, even to the giving our Bodies to be burnt for what we may call ſuch, and yet without any true Love for God in our Hearts; ſo likewiſe the ſame Apoſtle tells us, that we may beſtow all our Goods to feed the Poor, and yet not-

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withſtanding ſuch a Diſtribution, be void of the Spirit of *real Charity*. But I am now ſpeaking of, and recommending that Kind of Beneficence, which is the Fruit of Chriſtian Benevolence: And among the various Occaſions which offer for the Exerciſe of it, the Relief of the ſick and lame Poor of our County, under the Proviſions of a Publick INFIRMARY, is that which lays Claim to our preſent Attention.

And here it may be remarked in Behalf of theſe Inſtitutions, which I think holds true of few others, even the moſt excellent, that the Invention of Man has not yet been able to furniſh us with any Objections to them; which Argument concludes no leſs ſtrongly for their confeſſed publick Utility, than for their being founded on the moſt allowed Principles of Humanity. Many Conſiderations offer, which powerfully recommend Foundations of this Kind to our Encouragement and Support, and ſome which challenge a Preference of Regard to them above moſt others.

As, *firſt*, if we conſider the Greatneſs of the Diſtreſs. Poverty joined to Sickneſs, or to an ulcerated, broken, or diſlocated Frame of Body, bears doubly hard upon human

human Nature, and Eloquence muſt fail, where ſuch complicated Sufferings cannot move: for a *Lazarus* at the Gate is indeed a moſt affecting Orator, where the Heart is not hardened to a Degree of Inſenſibility more than brutal.

A *ſecond* Recommendation of theſe Houſes of Mercy is, that in this Exerciſe of our Bounty we are ſafe, both with reſpect to the Objects and the Application of it: As to the former, due Proviſion is made for ſufficient Information concerning the Poverty of the Parties to be admitted: And as to their bodily Maladies, there are few Caſes which do not explain themſelves by correſponding Symptoms, or can elude the ſkilful Obſervations of the Perſons appointed to inſpect and examine them; ſo that it is not Pretence, but Reality, not an artful Story, but actual Diſtreſs, that here ſollicits our compaſſionate Regard. And, in reſpect to the proper Application of the Sums ſent in and collected for the Support of this our INFIRMARY, the Prudence, Condition and Character of the Perſons who honour the Direction of it, the regular Accounts annually publiſhed, and a free Acceſs to the Books to ſatisfy any more

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minute Enquirer, are abundant Security on this Head.

A *third* Excellency of this *Charity* is the Care taken to promote and expedite, in the beſt Manner, the Cure of the Patients by a voluntary, regular, and gratuitous Attendance of Phyſicians and Surgeons of approved Judgment and Character in their Profeſſions, and who on that Account, as well as by reaſon of their *charitable* Care in directing all Things relating to Diet, Cleanlineſs, and other needful Accommodations, may juſtly be ſtyled principal Benefactors to this excellent Work, whilſt we have the Satisfaction of ſeeing the Benefit intended to the Poor by our Contributions taking Effect at the eaſieſt Expence, and thereby rendered the more extenſive.

I ſhall only mention one more conſiderable Benefit ariſing from theſe Inſtitutions, and that is the RELIGIOUS Uſe and Improvement of their Viſitations, which we may juſtly hope for from the Patients in the future Part of their Lives: And here the Benefit of theſe Houſes will riſe in Proportion to the greater Number who receive their Cure in them, than what could reaſonably be expected under the Want of ſuch

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ſuch ſalutary Proviſions; ſo that the ſaving a Life, under God, is oftentimes the means of ſaving a Soul from Death. It is before we are afflicted, that we are moſt prone to go wrong: We cannot but be ſenſible how apt the untamed Spirits, flowing from an active and vigorous State of Health, are to run away with our Serioufneſs, and to hurry us into Vanity, and a Forgetfulneſs of our Creator: But when the chaſtening Hand of the Lord is upon us; when Sickneſs or fractured Bones have ſhaken the Walls wherein we truſted, and brought down our Strength in our Journey, the Pride of Man is naturally humbled, the hard Heart mollified, and the Afflicted taught to cry unto the Lord in his Diſtreſs: Thus does He diſpoſe us to ſeek for the Strength and Succours of his Grace by the Weakneſs and Sufferings of our mortal Nature, and caſts us down on purpoſe that He may lift us up, that we may know and feel, that our *Help cometh even from the Lord, who hath made Heaven and Earth.* It is our Duty to improve theſe weaning and inſtructive Providences to the Spiritual Welfare of our Brethren, and to co-operate with them by ſupplying the moſt likely Means of their

Pſal. cxxi. 2.

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Cure, that the Mercy of a Recovery may give the additional Weight of Gratitude to the good Impreſſions which bodily Afflictions firſt excited, that ſo being led, both by the Goodneſs and Severity of God's Dealings, to Repentance and Amendment, they may, when they depart, have cauſe to ſay, upon this Account alſo, It is good for us to have been here.

And here our Subject leads us to lament the ſad Havock and Deſtruction which Sin hath brought upon the Earth in the various painful Diſeaſes and Sufferings to which the Condition of Mortality expoſes us. — How has the deadly Poiſon infected our Nature, and diffuſed univerſal Corruption through the human Race, wherein the lurking Venom carries on the fatal Work as certainly, tho' leſs ſenſibly, under the concealed Approaches of a gradual Decay, as by the more violent Attacks of a Calenture or Epilepſy, inſomuch that it may truly be ſaid of the whole Body of Mankind, that from the Sole of the Foot unto the Head, there is no Soundneſs in it; and well, therefore, may the World be compared to one Great Infirmary, where Death's Harbingers and Purveyors are preparing to execute on all

that

that irrevocable Sentence, *Duſt thou art, and to Duſt thou ſhalt return.* Ought we not then to have Compaſſion on our Fellow Servants, ſeeing that we ourſelves alſo are in the ſame Condemnation! But, alas! the Malady of Man's Nature is gone ſtill deeper, it has reached the immortal Part of it; nay, it was the Diſeaſe of his Soul which entailed that Corruption and Mortality upon his Body, on account of which Man, in his higheſt earthly Honour, is compared to the Beaſts that periſh. Pſal. xlix. 12.

We read that Almighty God, upon taking a Survey of the Six Days Work of Creation, pronounced of every thing which He had made, that it was very good: How beautiful and perfect then muſt he have been in his better Part, for whoſe Sake all Things were created! How excellent that Creature who was made in the Image, and after the Likeneſs of his Creator! But he luſted after the Vanity of Time, and ſo loſt the Riches of Eternity; together with his Innocence, his Divine Light, and Love, and Purity, departed from him—*God made Man upright, but he ſought out many Inventions*; he ſought to be happy independently of God, and ſo loſt his Happineſs in Him: Eccleſ. vii. 29.

Hence

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Hence by Nature our ſad Alienation from the Life of God; inſtead of Heavenly Wiſdom, a ſerpentine Craft; inſtead of Divine Love, groſs and corrupt Affections; and, in the room of that perfect Harmony in all its Powers and Faculties which tuned the Soul to Peace, all the Diſcord and Rage of conflicting Paſſions.— Behold, O Man! in this thy aggravated Miſery of a diſtempered Soul and Body, the Greatneſs of thy Fall, and ſad Apoſtacy! But behold alſo the Greatneſs of Redeeming Love, the infinite Compaſſions of thy ſo much neglected Saviour! who, *when thou waſt caſt out in the open Field to the loathing of thy Perſon, paſſed by thee, and when He ſaw thee polluted in thine own Blood, ſaid unto thee — Live. I paſſed by thee, and looked upon thee; and I ſpread my Skirt over thee, and covered thy Nakedneſs; yea, I ſware unto thee, and entered into a Covenant with thee, ſaith the Lord God, and thou becameſt mine.* This Diſplay of our Lord and Saviour's Commiſeration and Love to the fallen human Race is beautifully figured in the Mercy which the good *Samaritan* ſhewed to the poor wounded Traveller that fell among Thieves.

Ezek. xvi. 5, 6, 8.

Thieves *. — The Prieſt and the Levite paſſed by, but afforded him no Relief; for neither the Law, nor the Levitical Miniſtrations, could avail to Man's Salvation; ſuch Help could only come from the Great Phyſician of Souls, and Friend of Sinners, *who Himſelf took our Infirmities, and bare our Sickneſſes:* And *the Lord that healeth* is his Name. But tho' this be the Inſide and Spirit of the Parable, yet the Moral is drawn from the Outſide and Letter of it. Did the *Samaritan* ſhew Mercy to the wounded and diſtreſſed *Jew*, miniſtring to him the Means of his Cure, and defraying the neceſſary Charges of it? *Go, and do thou likewiſe*; be merciful after thy Power to All, and ſhew thy Love to God by this Proof of thy Love to thy Neighbour: *For whoſo hath this World's Good, and ſeeth his Brother have Need, and ſhutteth up the Bowels of his Compaſſion from him, how dwelleth the Love of God in him.*

Matth. viii. 17. Exod. xv. 26.

1 John iii. 17.

* For the ſpiritual Interpretation of this Parable, in its Reference to our Redemption by *Jeſus Chriſt*, ſee St. Auſt. *Quæſt. Evang.* lib. ii. as alſo, *Contra Pelag. Hypognoſt.* lib. iii. Chriſti *mos eſt in vulgaribus parabolis etiam ſublimiora aliqua myſteria nobis commendare: ita certe hac in parabola admodum eleganter nobis ſumma noſtri Chriſtianiſmi ob oculos pingitur. Vid.* Chemnit. Harm. Evang. *in loco.*

See alſo the Spiritual Homilies of *Macarius* the *Ægyptian.* Hom. xxx.

The

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The Application comes home to us, as Fellow-Chriſtians, with additional Force; and the Occaſion of our preſent Meeting gives a particular Emphaſis to it: And therefore let us turn our Thoughts to the *Houſe of Mourning*, for we are told that the *Heart of the Wiſe* is there; and thence learn a Leſſon of Humility, a Leſſon of Gratitude, and an Exerciſe of Charity.

Eccleſ. vii. 4.

Were I to conſider only *my own* Unfitneſs to be your Sollicitor this Day, I ſhould have much Reaſon to be diffident of Succeſs; but when I conſider *whoſe* Cauſe I plead; when I conſider before *whom* I plead; and, above all, when I conſider in *whoſe Name* I plead, I will not, I cannot think, that I ſhall plead in vain: Nor need I here to fetch any Weapons from the Armoury of Eloquence, nor ſeek to engage the Paſſions on my Side with artificial Strains of Rhetorick, ſeeing the INFIRMARY itſelf affords the moſt perſuaſive Motives to urge a compaſſionate Relief; and it would be ſufficient for this Purpoſe, would Time permit, to ſet open to your View that Theatre of Woes, where pining Atrophy, Convulſions, agonizing Throws, corroding Ulcers,

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Ulcers, the Torture of broken and diſlocated Bones, and various other Maladies and Diſaſters incident to the human Frame, form one complicated Scene both of viſible and audible Diſtreſs. Look down, you Wealthy and Honourable Ones, from your Height of Opulency and Splendour, and in theſe Sons and Daughters of Affliction acknowledge your Brethren, and own yourſelves to be but Men; for, *did not He that made* you *make* them, *and did not one faſhion* both *in the Womb?*—Whilſt in the Phraſe of *Job*, you *waſh* your *Steps with Butter, and the Rock pours out* to you *Rivers of Oil*, let the Streams of your Bounty refreſh the Hearts of the Sorrowful, and your Abundance be the Supplement to their Wants. —Thus may you excel in Goodneſs as in Greatneſs, and be counted worthy of double Honour.

Job xxxi. 15.

Ib. xxix. 6.

I next addreſs myſelf to you who are in a middle Station, placed ſafely between the two Extremes of Affluence and Indigence, and ſo poſſeſſed of what *Agur* prayed for: And, as you know no Want yourſelves, extend freely your Aſſiſtance to thoſe that do. The Law commanded to help the Beaſt of our Enemy fallen under his Burthen:

Prov. xxx. 8.

Exod. xxiii. 5.

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then: Bring not then a Reproach upon that Holy Name by which you are called, by refuſing to help a Neighbour, a Fellow-Chriſtian, being burthened with his Infirmitics. A Retrenchment of the Vanities, Superfluities, or in the faſhionable Expences of Life, will amply ſupply the Means of Beneficence to your diſtreſſed Brethren; and by ſuch a Chriſtian Piece of Oeconomy you will join the Practice of two Duties together, whilſt to that of *Charity* you add Self-Denial for *Charity's* Sake.

Laſtly, as to you whoſe Portion in the good Things of this Life is ſmall, tho' yourſelves no leſs dear to God on that Account, I muſt call upon you alſo for a Token of your Love. It was ordained under the Law, in the Matter of Offerings, that the Perſon, who was not able to bring a Lamb, ſhould bring two Turtle-Doves, or two young Pigeons; for no one was to *appear before the Lord empty*. Let not the Love of *Chriſt*, that perfect Law of Liberty, leſs conſtrain *you:* Let not the Free-will Offering of your *Chriſtian Charity* come ſhort of the Command of a *Jewiſh Oblation:* If thou haſt but little, yet be merciful after thy Power, and *do thy Diligence gladly to give of that little:*

Lev. v. 7. and xii. 8.

Exod. xxiv. 20.

Tob. iv. 8.

little: The little that thou giveſt will ſanctify the little that is left, and, truſt in the Lord, thou ſhalt have no lack.

This Application to you all of every Degree, on the Subject before us, comes backed with a Motive of undeniable Force, *viz.* that our Bleſſed Lord has declared his Acceptance of that Relief, which you afford to your afflicted Chriſtian Brethren from a Spirit of *Charity*, as done to Himſelf; for ſuch has He appointed his Subſtitutes for the Receipt of it: I call upon you then, for *Chriſt's* Sake, that you be *ready to diſtribute, willing to communicate:* Or if this Argument fails, there remains at leaſt one, which, if rightly laid to Heart, I am ſure, muſt prevail, which is, that we all ſtand in Need of Mercy, and therefore ought to ſhew it: I call upon you, therefore, for your own Sakes, by the Love you bear to your immortal Souls, that you come not ſhort of the Promiſe of Him who hath ſaid, *Bleſſed are the Merciful, for they ſhall obtain Mercy.*

1 Tim. vi. 18.

Matth. v. 7.

And now having pointed out that moſt *Excellent Way* of CHARITY, or *Love* to God and our Neighbour, that Goſpel Way of Pleaſantneſs, that ſure Path of Peace leading on to Glory, what remains but that we

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we walk therein? We are *called* Chriſtians, profeſſing one Faith, one Lord, one Baptiſm: Let us this Day ſhew ourſelves to be ſuch, not in Word only, but in Deed, and in Truth; whilſt our Faith worketh by Love, and our Love by ſhewing Mercy to the Poor.

It is a joyful Thing for Brethren to meet together in the Houſe of God as Friends: May this Joy be now fulfilled in the Hearts of us all, both High and Low, Rich and Poor, one with another! and, as we join in one common Labour of Love towards the Needy and Afflicted, may the ſame good Diſpoſition, improved, bring us together in the Unity of the Spirit, and in the Bond of Peace: Thus ſhall we *add to Brotherly-kindneſs Charity:* Thus ſhall the happy Effect of our aſſembling together cauſe Joy in Heaven, and make glad the City of God, whilſt Saints and Angels tune their Harps to louder Strains of Praiſe, as *they* ſing "GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST, AND "ON EARTH PEACE, GOOD-WILL TO-"WARDS MEN."

2 Pet. i. 7.

SER-

SERMON VIII.

True Liberty the Gift of the Son of God.

JOHN viii. 36.

If the Son therefore ſhall make you free, ye ſhall be free indeed.

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WHEN many of the *Jews* believed on *Chriſt* upon hearing the Words which He ſpake, our Lord took Occaſion to encourage them to perſevere in believing: *If*, ſays He, *ye continue in my Word, then are ye my Diſciples indeed, and ye ſhall know the Truth, and the Truth ſhall make you free.* As theſe Words ſeemed to reflect ſome Diſgrace upon that People, according to their carnal Apprehenſion of them (for there is a Belief to the ſaving of the Soul, and a Belief which carnal Men may have) they immediately took Fire, and in a Fit of angry Reſentment replied: *We be Abraham's Seed, and were never in Bondage*

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to any Man: How ſayeſt Thou, Ye ſhall be made free? However this Anſwer might evince their Zeal for the Honour of their Lineage and Nation, yet it was far from being a Proof of their Regard to Truth; for tho' the former Part of it was true, *viz.* that they were *Abraham's* Seed, according to the Fleſh; yet the latter was not ſo, their Forefathers having been Bond-Slaves in *Ægypt* and Captives in *Babylon*, and they themſelves at that very time were, tho' not in Bondage, yet, under Subjection, and tributary to the *Romans*. However, our Saviour reproached them not with that; He meddled not with their Civil Liberties or Civil Matters—Bond and Free were alike to Him in that reſpect, his Buſineſs on Earth being of a Spiritual Nature, and ſuch the Meaning of his Words, as his Anſwer ſhews: *Verily, Verily, I ſay unto you, Whoſoever committeth Sin, is the Servant of Sin.* Wherever Sin reigns in the Heart and is obeyed in the outward Life, that Perſon is in the moſt miſerable Thraldom and a Slave to the worſt of Tyrants—*His Servants ye are to whom ye obey, whether of Sin unto Death, or of Obedience unto Righteouſneſs.* Now, ſays our Lord in the next Verſe, *The Servant abid-*

eth not in the Houſe for ever, but the Son abideth ever. Which Words in their primary Senſe refer to *Moſes*, who was only a Servant in the Houſhold of God, whereas *Chriſt* was the Son and Heir and Lord of all Things. —The Diſpenſation of the former was only temporary and to lead thoſe that were under it to *Chriſt*, whereas that of the latter was to be an everlaſting Covenant, even the ſure Mercies of *David*.—The firſt was a Miniſtration of Bondage, Condemnation, and Death; the ſecond of Liberty, Grace, and Life. But in a ſecondary Senſe theſe Words of our Lord may be paraphraſed thus:—As among Men, according to the Laws of Society, the Servant, tho' at preſent one in the Family, has no Inheritance or Right of Property in his Maſter's Goods, but theſe deſcend to the Son or Heir: So in the outward Church on Earth, however the Servants of Sin are mixed with the Servants of God, like Tares among the Wheat, yet when the Inheritance comes to be divided at the Great Day of Diſtribution, the latter only ſhall partake in it; for then it ſhall be ſaid—*Caſt out the Bond-woman and her Son, for the Son of the Bond-woman ſhall not be Heir with the Son of the Free-woman.*

But leſt it ſhould be replied — Are we not all Servants of Sin both by original Defilement and actual Tranſgreſſion? Who then can be ſaved? Our Saviour therefore adds—*If the Son ſhall make you free, ye ſhall be free indeed*; i. e. However you are by Nature Children of Wrath, and however you may be, thro' ſinful Acts and Habits, the Servants of Corruption, and as ſuch can lay no Claim to any Part of the heavenly Inheritance, yet if the Son of God, who is Heir and Lord of all Things, free you from your Bondage and bring you into the Liberty of Sons, then ſhall you divide the Inheritance with Him; for tho' by original Extraction you are Aliens and out of the true Filiation, yet thro' Grace being made real * Children by Adoption and a vital Participation of the Divine Nature derived from the ſecond

* Tho' the Adoption of Children among Men be only a nominal or reputed Relation, yet in the Divine Life it conſiſts in a real and ſpiritual Birth, and indeed muſt do ſo; for altho' one Man has a natural Fitneſs or Capacity to inherit the things of another, yet this holds not true with reſpect to the heavenly Inheritance, for Corruption cannot inherit Incorruption: And therefore in order to our Meetneſs to be made Partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light we muſt by our Spiritual Union with *Chriſt* the King of Saints receive of his Fullneſs a Meaſure of that Holineſs without which no Man ſhall ſee the Lord, and ſo by the Sanctification of his Spirit be qualified for Glorification in his Kingdom.

Adam,

Adam, who is a quickening Spirit, and the Fountain of a new and holy Life to us; by this new Relation you become Heirs of God and joint Heirs with *Chriſt*. To which purpoſe are thoſe Words of our Lord to his Heavenly Father concerning the Children of the Redemption: *The Glory which thou gaveſt me I have given them, that they may be one even as we are one.* For, *He who ſanctifieth, and they who are ſanctified are all of one, for which Cauſe He is not aſhamed to call them Brethren.*

Thus to as many as receive Him into their Hearts by Faith, and continue in his Word, doth the Lord *Jeſus* give ſuch precious Promiſes and Privileges, for theſe are the true legitimate Seed of faithful *Abraham*, and rightful Heirs of the Covenant of Grace; nay a greater than *Abraham* is their Father, for they are *born not of Blood, nor of the Will of the Fleſh, nor of the Will of Man, but of God.* O that this glorious Truth may be impreſſed upon our Minds in more durable Characters than if written upon a Rock with the Point of a Diamond! And O! (which is of the higheſt Importance to us) that the Experience of it may be ſealed upon our Hearts by the Spirit of the Living God!

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It is obſervable, that the ſame Property or Power, *viz.* to make us free, which is aſcribed to Truth in Ver. 32. of this Chapter, is aſcribed to the Son of God in that of the Text, to evidence to us that *Chriſt* is what He declares himſelf to be, the Way, the Truth and the Life, not only as He has outwardly revealed Truth to us, but as He is within us that Principle of living Truth which is the Power of God unto Salvation: And therefore thoſe Expoſitors who interpret theſe Words of Doctrinal Knowledge only, however great their Names may be, have not entered into the full Senſe and Meaning of them; for People may have much Head-knowledge of the Scriptures, and right Notions of Doctrines, and yet continue the Servants of Corruption. In vain Men boaſt of the Purity of their particular Church or the Truth of its Doctrines, whilſt they continue ſpeculative Believers only, and have not their Hearts purified by Faith; for tho' a Diſtinction in point of Preference is due to one outward Communion of *Chriſtians* above others, yet ſo long as they are not of the People of God, who worſhip the Father in Spirit and in Truth, and therefore have not Fellowſhip with the Father, nor with the Son,

Son, whether they worſhip at *Samaria* or *Jeruſalem*, whether they be of the Church of *England*, or the Church of *Scotland*, of the Church of *Geneva*, or the Church of *Rome*, 'tis all one, for if any Man have not the Spirit of *Chriſt* he is none of his; he remains a Slave to his Sins or to his Ceremonies, to his Doctors or to his Doctrines, and is no Free-man, for *where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is Liberty*, and there only.

When *Pilate* aſked our Lord, *What is Truth?* we do not read that He made any Reply to his Queſtion, as an Interrogatory of that Importance ſeemed to require: And what may we ſuppoſe to have been the Reaſon of this Silence? Why this—The Queſtion was probably captious or curious in the Deſign of the Propoſer, and not offered for the ſake of any real Inſtruction; and therefore it is not to be thought that an Anſwer tho' proceeding from the Oracle of Truth, would have had any good Effect upon the Mind of ſo ill-diſpoſed a Queriſt: Hence it was that the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, who were preſent at ſo many of our Lord's Divine Diſcourſes, received no Benefit from them, they came with an inſidious Deſign to entangle Him in his Talk, and therefore,

tho' He ſpake as never Man ſpake, yet they went away neither wiſer nor better for what they heard.

Beware then, my Brethren, how you entertain Prejudices againſt the Truth, for where this is the Caſe, tho' *Chriſt* himſelf, as in the Days of his Fleſh, were your Preacher, you might not profit by Him; for however it is of the Nature of Truth to ſet us free, yet it does not ſet us free from wilful Prejudices and determined Oppoſition to it, becauſe Truth can only operate within us, but this it cannot do if we ſtop the Way and ſhut the Door againſt it; and if it gain no Admittance into our Hearts that it may exert its Divine Energy there, it can no more help the Soul than Medicines can the Body that does not receive them. We call the Scriptures the Word of God, inaſmuch as they teſtify of Him who is the Living Word of God that abideth for ever, and as they were ſpoken and written by holy Men of old as they were moved by the Holy Ghoſt; if then we receive their Teſtimony, and the Truth which they are appointed to convey, in Demonſtration of that ſame Power and Inſpiration by which they were given, they become really profitable for our Inſtruction

in

in Godlineſs; otherwiſe, whether they be preached or read, they are only Sounds and Syllables, we hear the Voice of Man but not the Voice of God, we read Language and Propoſitions and annex our own Ideas to them, but attain not to Divine Truth, for this lyeth not in the Conjectures, Apprehenſions, or invented Meanings which Man's Wiſdom teacheth, but is of far more noble Extraction, even the Breath of the Power of God, and a pure Influence that floweth from the Glory of the Almighty, the Brightneſs of the everlaſting Light, the undefiled Mirrour of the Majeſty of God, which entring into holy Souls maketh them the Friends of God and Prophets. This Inſpiration of the Almighty giving Underſtanding is the only true Interpreter of Spiritual Things, the living Rule, the infallible Guide: *The Words which I ſpeak unto you*, ſays our Lord, *they are Spirit and they are Life.* And this may help us in a ſort to conceive in what Senſe *Chriſt*, as to his Divine Nature, is called the Word of God, *viz.* as He is the full Energy of the Deity exerted and expreſſed in Operation and Act: Thus He is the Word of God's Power, for as He *created all things*, ſo He

upholdeth

upholdeth all things by the Word of his Power: And He is the Word of God's Truth, the uncreated Wisdom, the Fountain of Illumination, and as such quick and powerful to convince, to convert, and to bring us *out of Darkness into his marvellous Light.* And He is also the Word of God's Grace which is *able to build us up, and to give us an Inheritance among all them which are sanctified.*

I proceed to discourse briefly on the Nature of Christian Liberty in some chief Particulars wherein the Son of God doth set us free.

And *first*, He sets us free from our natural Ignorance and Blindness with respect to the things of God.

In Man by Nature, we are told, dwelleth no good thing, and consequently no saving Knowledge of God, but *the only begotten Son which is in the Bosom of the Father He hath declared Him. Christ Jesus* hath been in all Ages of the World the Light of the World in Divine things, tho' under different Dispensations of Clearness and Manifestation; and He who to others in times past was as a Light shining in a dark Place, *hath brought Life and Immortality to Light* more abundantly *thro' his Gospel:* But as it was in the Days of *Moses* that the *Ægyptians* were involved

involved in Darkneſs, whilſt the Children of *Iſrael* had Light in all their Dwellings, ſo it is now, *Light is come into the World, but Men love Darkneſs rather than Light*, and ſo are deprived of the Benefit of it; for outward Diſcoveries of Truth till inwardly received, can no more profit than the Sun in the Firmament can give Sight to the Blind, but when that ſame God who *commanded the natural Light to ſhine out of Darkneſs ſhineth in our Hearts to give us the Light of the Knowledge of the Glory of God in the Face of Jeſus Chriſt*; then in his Light we truly ſee Light, and the two Witneſſes agree together as Face anſwereth to Face in a Glaſs.

The Difference of Judgment betwixt the ſpiritual and natural Man concerning Divine things lyes not in the rational Powers, or in the Acquirements of Learning, but in the different State and Condition of their Souls; the one ſees them by a heavenly, the other ſeeks them by an earthly Light, therefore, like the Horſes and Chariots of Fire at *Dothan*, what is clearly diſcerned by the one, is inviſible to the other. How weak and ignorant was *Nicodemus* in his Conference with our Lord on the Subject of Regeneration! And yet *Nicodemus* was a Maſter in *Iſrael.*

SERMON VII.

Iſrael. What a furious Perſecutor of *Chriſtianity* was *Paul* before his Converſion! and yet *Paul* was a great Scholar. But when it pleaſed the Lord to take away the Scales from their Eyes, and to open their Underſtandings, what they accounted Folly before, they now eſteemed the higheſt Wiſdom, and could ſay with the Pſalmiſt, as touching their former Blindneſs, *So fooliſh was I and ignorant, even as a Beaſt before Thee.* And ſo it is with the *Chriſtian* whoſe Eyes the Lord hath opened to ſee the wondrous things of his Law, for then he can truly ſay: "This one thing I know, that whereas "I was blind, now I ſee." He who before was ready to caſt Stones at any that ſhould tell him of his Weakneſs, Sin and Miſery, now ſees of a Truth and readily confeſſes, that he is of himſelf poor, and wretched, and miſerable, and blind, and naked: He who once thought it enough to ſpeak reſpectfully of *Chriſt*, but felt no abſolute need of Him in his Soul, now ſees Him to be his only Hope and only Help, and that in Him alone, as the only begotten of the Father full of Grace and Truth, lyes all his Wiſdom, Righteouſneſs, Sanctification, and Redemption: He who in Times paſt could ſee no Harm

Harm in the vain Pleaſures, Paſs-times and Amuſements of a ſinful World, but took Pleaſure in them and thoſe that followed them, now ſees that the End of theſe things is Death, and can only take Delight in the Ways and People of God: And laſtly, he who was accuſtomed to read the Scriptures only as a Hiſtory or a Syſtem of good moral Rules and Precepts, the Vail being now taken away from before his Eyes, he diſcovers therein the hidden Treaſures of Divine Wiſdom, even the Wiſdom of God in a Myſtery: they are no longer a Book ſealed, but the Lamb hath opened the Seals thereof, given him a right Underſtanding in all needful Truth, and made him wiſe unto Salvation.

But *ſecondly:* As the Son of God ſets us free from all dangerous Ignorance and Error in things pertaining to God; ſo doth He likewiſe from the prevailing Power of Sin. When *Adam* fell from God, he fell under the Power of the Devil and his Angels; and had not the Son of God, by a miraculous Interpoſition of Love, come to his Relief, as the Bruiſer of the Serpent, to deſtroy the Work of the Devil, even all that Sin had wrought to his Perdition, there could have been

been no Help for him either in the Height above or in the Depth beneath—This is ſignified to us in the Parable of the Traveller that fell among Thieves. In this miſerable Spectacle behold, O Man! thy ſelf pourtrayed: (for by Nature thou ſtandeſt in the Image of fallen *Adam*, and the Image of God is thy new Birth by Grace from the ſecond *Adam*;) thou art fallen among Thieves who have ſtripped thee of thy Virgin Innocence, robbed thee of thy fair Garland of Perfection, wounded thy Conſcience and left thee half dead, even deſtitute of that ſpiritual and holy Life which was thy Crown of Glory and Immortality: Stop awhile and conſider here thy twofold Original by Nature; firſt, as thou cameſt out of the Hands of thy Creator, pure and ſpotleſs as the Angels, the Glory of the Creation, the Envy of Devils, and the Delight of God. How bleſſed was the Time when Man knew no Sorrow as he knew no Sin; when a free Communication was open betwixt Heaven and Earth, and Angels were ſeen deſcending and aſcending between the two peaceful Kingdoms, nay when God himſelf condeſcended to converſe with Man with the Familiarity of a Friend.

But

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But ſoon, alas! was this happy Scene cloſed by that fatal Period when Sin entered into the World, and Death by Sin. By this woful Apoſtacy was brought about in the Soul that ſad Reverſe from Purity to Pollution, from Innocence to Guilt: The Divine Image left ſorrowful her defiled Manſion—The Soul felt itſelf wounded with the poiſoned Dart of Sin—The Mind became darkened and diſordered in all its Faculties, the Judgment perverted, the Affections miſplaced, and the Will inclined to Evil continually—The Body became beſtial and diſeaſed, ſubject to Mortality and Corruption, and the whole Man (the moſt excellent Part of God's Workmanſhip) diſfigured and ſpoiled, inſomuch that he who was before a glorious Diſplay and Temple of the ever-bleſſed Trinity, became at once the Captive and Deriſion of inſulting Devils: Nay the whole Creation ſympathized with Man in the ſad Cataſtrophe of the Fall—That equable Temperature and Harmony in which conſiſted the permanent Health and Beauty, and the Perfection of every Creature, withdrew; Diſcord, the Parent of Diſtemper and Decay, raged thro' all the Elements, and every Life of Nature felt

Corrup-

Corruption: So much indeed of Good was left as might ſet forth the Wiſdom and Power of the Creator, ſo much as might explain to Man the greater Good he had loſt, but abundantly ſufficient of Evil took place, thro' Loſs of that Good, to make Man feel the wretched Effects of Sin, to convince him of the Folly of his Choice, and to lead him back to God by Repentance: At ſo dear a Price was bought the Knowledge of Good and Evil *.

Behold here, O Man, thy ſecond ſad Original, and ſee thyſelf in fallen *Adam*, and fallen *Adam* in thyſelf! Where now is thy boaſted Liberty, the Sufficiency of thy Reaſon, and that conceited Dignity of thy Nature which thou haſt learned to prate of? Why I tell thee from Authority no leſs than ſacred, that thou art born blind; that

* It may not be unſeaſonable to remark here on the Error of moſt Phyſico-Theologiſts in ſuppoſing the preſent mundane Syſtem to continue in its original State of Perfection, and who therefore ſtretch their Invention to reconcile the Diſorder and Evil that is in Nature with the infinite Wiſdom and Goodneſs of God, and to find out phyſical Uſes for the ſame; not conſidering that the preſent Conſtitution of Things is in a mixt Condition of Good and Evil, and that if natural Evil in ſome Inſtances may ſerve by its Counteraction to reſtrain or remedy the ſame in others, yet that ſuch a neceſſity of working lay not in God, but is the gracious Effect of his over-ruling Power; for that before the Curſe all things were very good, and *only* became otherwiſe for moral Uſes and Purpoſes to Man.

thou

thou waſt conceived in Sin, and art by Nature a Child of Wrath; and that thou mayſt with *Job* ſay to Corruption, *Thou art my Father, and to the Worm, Thou art my Mother and my Siſter:* Nay thou art a diſeaſed Leper all over, and from the Crown of the Head to the Sole of the Foot there is nothing but Wounds and Bruiſes and putrifying Sores; thou art likewiſe by Condition a Captive in the Hands of thy moſt deadly Enemies, and there is but a Breath of Air betwixt thy Soul and the Pit of Hell: Such is thy Genealogy and State by Nature: But ſee! The good *Samaritan* is paſſing by — He ſtops—He ſees thee in thy Blood—He pities thy Diſtreſs and Poverty, and comes to thy Relief — He offers thee "Gold tried in "the Fire that thou mayſt be rich, and white "Rayment that thou mayſt be cloathed, and "that the Shame of thy Nakedneſs do not "appear; and bids thee to anoint thine Eyes "with his Eye-ſalve that thou mayſt ſee." In a word, He is come to pay thy Ranſom and to looſe the captive Chain, to do away thy Sin, and to heal thine Infirmities, and to give Power to as many as will receive Him to become the Sons of God: But for a Word of Doctrine upon the Point.

Rev. iii. 18.

The Son of God ſets us free from the prevailing Power of Sin by the Spirit of Grace and Sanctification in the Hearts of Believers: *for where the Spirit of the Lord is there is Liberty* in this reſpect alſo. Let it be remembered, that I ſpeak here of Freedom from the prevailing Power of Sin, and not of ſinleſs Perfection: and this Diſtinction ought to be well retained. Whatever is contrary to the Purity and Holineſs of the Divine Nature has in it the Nature of Sin, and ſomething of this remains even in the Children of the Regeneration during their ſtay in theſe earthly Tabernacles; and therefore it is that we hear even the Apoſtle complaining of in-dwelling Sin: And yet this well conſiſts with thoſe Words of St. *John, Whoſoever is born of God, doth not commit Sin, for his* (i. e. God's) *Seed remaineth in him.* The regenerate *Chriſtian* (taking his Name from his better Part) ſinneth not in that Divine Nature of which he is made Partaker, for the incorruptible Seed, which is *Chriſt* in him the Hope of Glory, cannot ſin: But the Law in his Members, that Seed of the Serpent which warreth againſt the Seed of the Woman in his mortal evil Nature (for they are contrary the one to the other) is daily fighting

fighting againſt and troubling him: But then he can ſay with St. Paul; *If I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but Sin that dwelleth in me:* Now he that can ſay this, is no longer the Servant of Sin to obey it in the Luſts thereof; tho' it be his Adverſary to moleſt him and exerciſe his Vigilance and prove his Conſtancy, it is not his Lord to exerciſe Dominion over him, for he hates and ſtrives againſt it; being then mortified in his Will and Affections to it, how can he who is thus dead to Sin live any longer therein? the *Chriſtian* then, tho' aſſaulted, and that almoſt continually, by the Corruptions of his Nature and by the infernal Malice and Power of evil Spirits, *for we wreſtle not only againſt Fleſh and Blood, but againſt Principalities, againſt Powers, againſt the Rulers of the Darkneſs of this World, againſt Spiritual Wickedneſs in high Places*; yet in all theſe things he is more than Conqueror thro' Him that loveth him, for the Lord, whoſe he is, and whom he ſerves, hath provided him with Armour, inſtructed him in the Uſe of it, and giveth him Victory in the Battle.

Thirdly, The Son of God ſets us free from the Bondage and Condemnation of the

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Law. The Law is generally considered only as an outward Directory or System of Duties, and not as likewise shadowing out a Condition of the Soul in its way to *Christ:* but herein it is not without its Spiritual Meaning and Reference. As the Servitude of the *Israelites* in *Ægypt* figures to us Man's spiritual Bondage by Nature, whereby he is tied and bound with the Chains of inbred Sin and Corruption, so the Maledictions and Condemnation of the Law represent to us that Sentence of Death in Himself which every Sinner feels upon the Law being sent home to his Heart with a convincing Power by the Spirit of God, filling his Conscience with dreadful Apprehensions of the Punishment due to Sin, and representing God as a consuming Fire taking Vengeance of all Ungodliness. These slavish Fears the troubled Soul oft-times continues under for a long Season, the Remembrance of its Sins being grievous unto it, and the Burthen of them intolerable; and in this Wilderness State of Doubts and Fears, surrounded with Dangers and Enemies on every Side, it travels as did the *Israelites* in the Desert till the typical *Moses* delivered them up to the typical *Joshua* to conduct them into the promised

miſed Land: Thus the Law maketh nothing perfect, neither can it give Reſt to the wounded Conſcience: This muſt be the Work of *Jeſus* our ſpiritual *Joſhua*, to whom we are invited to come in Faith, that He may free us from this Bondage alſo, give us Reſt in Himſelf, and guide our Feet in the way of Peace, according to that his gracious Promiſe, *Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you Reſt.*

But having conſidered this Point more largely in another Place,

I proceed *fourthly* to obſerve, That the Son of God ſets us free from the Slavery of the World, that great Tyrant which keeps ſo many Millions of Souls in Bondage.

We hear much Talk of Liberty, and ſee great Fears and Jealouſies employed about it: and indeed, my Brethren, Liberty is a precious thing and well worth the Care and Pains of preſerving; but yet how many among thoſe who make ſuch a Stir about it continue willingly the Servants of Corruption! What Man is he that goeth on to enlarge his Deſires as Hell, that he may add Houſe to Houſe and Land to Land, and ſet his Neſt on high? What Woman is that who wearieth herſelf for very Vanity, that ſhe

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may be as fine and fashionable as her Neighbours, and prideth herself in that which is no better than the Badge of her Shame? Who are all they that haste to rise up early and late take Rest, eating the Bread of Carefulness with such Distrust and Anxiety about the Supplies of Life as if there were no God in *Israel* that careth for his Children? These may call themselves *Christians* and free, but I tell you of a Truth, that all they who so mind earthly things are less than virtuous contented Heathens, and greater Slaves than the meanest Hewers of Wood and Drawers of Water; they are Vassals to their own unreasonable and foolish Passions, and Drudges to a short Life which the very Fowls of the Air pass with less Wretchedness and Disquiet: But when the Son of God hath stablished our Hearts with his free Spirit, we are delivered from the Hands of these Lords and Task-masters which have exercised such tyrannous Rule over us, we know that He in whom we trust both for Soul and Body is a faithful Creator, and therefore have learned to cast all our Care upon Him who careth for us.

Another Bondage which comes under this Head is the Fear of Man in things per-

pertaining to God. This has ever been a Hindrance and Snare to many Perſons even of Good Will in their religious Progreſs, they fear to honour God in their Lives, as they ought, leſt the Lord ſhould keep them back from the Honour that cometh of Man! But when the Son has made us free, his Spirit fortifies the Soul againſt all Oppoſition, and makes the Man of God valiant for the Truth; and here if we prove faithful to the Grace given us, we have nothing to fear, but ſhall be carried ſafe thro' Shame and Sufferings of every kind, for He that rideth on the White Horſe is our Leader and Defender; and "He hath a Bow to wound his Ad-"verſaries, and a Crown to give his Fol-"lowers, and he goeth forth conquering "and to conquer."

The laſt Thing in which I ſhall inſtance as the *Chriſtian's* Gift and Privilege, is a Freedom to Righteouſneſs.

The heavy Bondage of the firſt Covenant or Legal Diſpenſation given by *Moſes* and typified by *Hagar* and *Iſmael*, conſiſted not, as it is underſtood by many, in the Number and Slavery of its Rites and Ce-

remonies, but chiefly as it required of Man a perfect Rectitude of Life without miniſtring Strength for the Work, like as the *Ægyptian* Taſk-maſters exacted of the *Hebrews* the full Tale of Brick without giving them Straw: Nor indeed is it in the Nature of an outward Law to give inward Power for Obedience: This muſt come from another Source, and fallen Man can only fulfil the Law of God by virtue of the Law of the Spirit of Life, giving both Will and Strength for Performance: And therefore as Obedience could not be paid to the Law by Man, ſo neither could Juſtification be attained to by it: This cometh by our New Creation in *Chriſt Jeſus*, which is that Grace of God which bringeth Salvation, and whereby we are made a willing People in the Day of his Power, to walk in the Obedience of Faith, and "to offer "up ſpiritual Sacrifices acceptable to God "by *Jeſus Chriſt*." Hereby the Will of God (which is our Sanctification) is wrought in us, and Works of Righteouſneſs (the Effect of a juſtifying Faith) are brought forth by us: In a word; hereby all Things obtain their proper Order and Courſe: The Tree is made good, and there-

therefore the Fruit is good alſo; Duties have their Foundation in Graces, and the Service of God is perfect Freedom. We therefore greatly diſhonour as well as miſtake the Nature of *Chriſtianity*, when we repreſent it to ourſelves or others as conſiſting in conſtrained Acts of Duty and outward Worſhip, in a ſet Behaviour, a forced Converſation on religious Subjects, in talking much of *Chriſt*, or ſpeaking Scripture Language: for Labour and Study to do theſe Things ſhews that we are not yet brought into *Chriſtian* Liberty, which is a Freedom to Righteouſneſs and to a Life and Converſation becoming the Goſpel of *Chriſt:* It is then only we can truly ſay, that his Yoke is eaſy and his Burden light, that the Ways of his Religion are Ways of Pleaſantneſs, and that all its Paths are Peace; for in Newneſs of Spirit Newneſs of Life is natural, and therefore eaſy, and with Delight we run the Way of his Commandments when he hath ſet our Hearts at Liberty.

But here let it be obſerved by way of Caution to him who is called to be the Lord's Free-man, that he be not high minded but fear. Is he brought into Liberty? Let

Let him rejoyce in his Liberty with an humble and thankful Heart, and have the tenderest Compaſſion on them that are in Bonds, even under the Law to *Chriſt*, not preſuming to deſpiſe the Day of ſmall Things in others, but condeſcending to Men of low Eſtate, and bearing their Burdens as a Fellow-helper with them in their Weakneſs; remembering that if he differeth from another, he hath nothing but what he hath received as a free Gift, and therefore ought not to glory as if he had not received it: Beſides, God is the Judge, and He putteth down one and ſetteth up another.—Again; Let him uſe his Liberty with Moderation and Prudence both towards them that are without and them that are within; for tho' all Things of an indifferent Nature be lawful to him, yet all Things are not expedient: *Chriſtian* Liberty ought to ſubject itſelf to the Law of Charity, and never be uſed where it may give Offence to our weak Brethren.

I ſhall conclude with the mention of ſome few Particulars, wherein the Son of God hath not ſet us free, to prevent ſome fatal Miſtakes concerning the Nature of *Chriſtian* Liberty. And

Firſt,

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First, He hath not releaſed us from Obedience and Subjection to the Civil Powers, but on the contrary obliged us by Precept and his own Example to obey them that are in Authority and have Rule over us, as well for Conſcience ſake as becauſe they are Miniſters of God to us for good, either in the way of Protection, or Correction.

Secondly, He has not ſet us free from conforming to the Rules and Orders of that Society of *Chriſtians* with whom we are in Communion, provided ſuch Rules and Orders do not reſtrain us from bringing Glory to God, by promoting the ſpiritual Welfare of our Neighbour, nor any Ways hinder our own Advancement in Godlineſs; for in theſe Things one is our Maſter, even *Chriſt*, and no other.

Thirdly, He has not taken away or ſlackened our Obligations to any moral or relative Duty; for theſe are bound upon us by a Law that altereth not; and therefore *Antinomian* Doctrine is here *Antichriſtian* Doctrine; tho' there is the leſs Occaſion for Caution in this Particular, as one great Part of *Chriſtian* Liberty conſiſts in render-

rendering the Practice of these Duties our free Choice and willing Service.

Lastly, The Son of God does not set us free from Afflictions, Crosses and Temptations; for these prove the *Christian's* Fidelity, exercise his Graces, and perfect him in the School of *Christ*. But in all Things wherein we are entangled and held to the Damage of our Souls and to the endangering of our Salvation, if we wait faithfully and patiently, upon the Lord, He will deliver us; and if in these Things the Son shall make us free we shall be free indeed. Hath He then called us out of Darkness into his marvellous Light? Let us walk as Children of the Light and of the Day: Hath He rescued us from the Power of Sin and Satan to bring us into the glorious Liberty of the Sons of God? Let us stand fast in the Liberty wherewith *Christ* hath made us free, and not be intangled again with the Yoke of Bondage.

Now to Him who hath visited and redeemed his People, that we being delivered out of the Hands of our Enemies, may serve Him without Fear, in Holiness

Holineſs and Righteouſneſs before Him all the Days of our Life, be aſcribed all Honour and Glory of us and all the Iſrael *of God, now and for evermore.* Amen.

SERMON IX.

Chriſt both the hidden and revealed Myſtery.

COLOSS. i. 26.

The Myſtery which hath been hid from Ages and from Generations, but now is made manifeſt to his Saints.

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WITHOUT Controverſy, ſays the ſame Apoſtle, "Great is the My-"ſtery of Godlineſs, God was "manifeſt in the Fleſh." And St. *Peter*, ſpeaking of the Riches of Divine Grace and Love diſplayed in our Redemption by *Jeſus Chriſt*, and preached by the Power of the Holy Ghoſt, adds, "which Things "the Angels deſire to look into:" Implying, that the Work and Proceſs of Man's Salvation, as related in the Goſpel and carried on in the Souls of the Faithful, affords Matter of Wonder and Aſtoniſhment to thoſe bleſſed Beings (how little ſoever ſome more

more nearly concerned ſeem to be affected by it) who excited by a Holy Curioſity deſire to pry into this Myſtery of Compaſſion and Mercy, that they may be furniſhed with a freſh Theme for the Praiſe of the Divine Goodneſs. But the Holy Angels, tho' employed on many Occaſions and Meſſages relating to this Wonder of Love; tho' they intereſt themſelves ſo much in the Happineſs of Men, as to rejoice at their Converſion; and are appointed to be their Guardians and Protectors under God, to miniſter to the Heirs of Salvation; yet as *Chriſt* took not on him the Nature of Angels, but the Nature of Man, ſo they cannot experience that Grace of God which bringeth Salvation, as they do not need it, nor penetrate into the Myſteries of a Faith which is neither ſuited to their Nature nor Occaſions: But yet they know enough of the Love of *Chriſt* for Mankind to give Glory to God on High for Peace reſtored on Earth, and for ſuch amazing good Will towards Men as is now manifeſted in the gracious and wonderful Oeconomy of their Redemption. The Myſtery then here ſpoken of is the Whole of Man's Redemption as revealed in the Goſpel Diſpenſation:

and

and the chief Buſineſs at preſent will be to ſhew,

Firſt, In what Senſe it was a hidden Myſtery before the Time of this Revelation; and

Secondly, How and to whom it is now made manifeſt.

That *Chriſt* a Saviour was promiſed to *Adam* and *Eve* by God Himſelf under the Character of the Seed of the Woman that ſhould bruiſe the Serpent's Head, we read *Gen.* iii. That this comfortable Doctrine was tranſmitted to their Poſterity, and that *Seth*, *Enoch*, and *Noah* were Preachers of Righteouſneſs in the Spirit of *Chriſt* is not to be doubted; for "by Faith *Noah*, being "warned of God of Things not ſeen as yet, "prepared the Ark to the ſaving of his "Houſe." But what other Faith was this than Faith in that Redeemer, of which the Ark was a Type, and who ſhould ſave his People from their Sins?

Abraham ſoon after the Flood had, according to the Teſtimony of *Chriſt* himſelf, very clear Diſcoveries of Him; nay ſo eminent was his Faith, that he is ſtyled the Father of the Faithful: And among

his near Deſcendants were ſome remarkable Types of the Meſſiah, as *Iſaac*, *Jacob*, and *Joſeph*. If we come lower down to the giving of the Law by *Moſes*, the Predictions and Reſemblances of the Saviour, in his Perſon and Offices, thicken upon us, the Law being in almoſt all its Miniſtrations and Services a School-maſter to lead its Diſciples to *Chriſt*; accordingly, all its Sacrifices and Offerings, and the very Structure and Furniture of the Tabernacle, as likewiſe thoſe of the Temple afterwards, were Prefigurations of this kind: Nay the miraculous Food and Water miniſtred to the *Iſraelites* in the Wilderneſs, their extraordinary Deliverances and ſignal Victories, together with the moſt illuſtrious and beſt of their Heroes, Judges, and Kings are conſidered, many of them by the inſpired Writers, in their ſeveral Deſignations and Characters, as ſo many Leſſons of Inſtruction to teach both them and us what *Chriſt* was to be, do, or ſuffer, in the Fullneſs of Time, for the *Iſrael* of God.

Theſe things being ſo, we are not to underſtand by the Words of the Text, that the Myſtery of Goſpel Salvation was ſo hid before the Coming of *Chriſt* in the Fleſh,

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as to be entirely unknown, for that was not the Caſe; but only that it was ſhaded under obſcure and diſtant Reſemblances, and repreſented in Types and Allegories then little underſtood by the Generality. The *Jews*, it is true, had the Writings of *Moſes* and the Prophets, and theſe were read every Sabbath Day to the People, yet ſo great was their Blindneſs at the Time of our Lord's perſonal Appearance among them, that they knew not Him who was the Sum and Subſtance of their Scriptures, nay, argued againſt his Miſſion and Character from thoſe very Writings which in ſo many Places expreſsly teſtified of Him: The Reaſon was this; their Hearts were carnal, and conſequently their Underſtanding alſo, and therefore they erred, not knowing the Scriptures: Hence *Chriſt's* humble Appearance in the Fleſh was a hidden Myſtery to thoſe whoſe Minds were ſet upon Vanity, and who had pictured the Meſſiah on their fond Imaginations in the Likeneſs of earthly Majeſty; and hence it was that the Words which He ſpake, and the Works which He did, the Sufferings He underwent, and the Nature of that Kingdom which He came to erect, were all hidden Myſteries to

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them: But tho' it was thus with the greater Part of the *Jews*, yet it was not ſo with all, for we read of *Simeon* and *Anna* and other ſpiritual Perſons that looked for Redemption in *Jeruſalem* at that Time; and are given to underſtand by this and other Proofs in Scripture, that our gracious and good God never ſuffered his Truth entirely to fail on Earth, never left Himſelf without Witneſs in the Hearts of ſome choſen Veſſels, even in Times of the greateſt Darkneſs and Apoſtacy, to teſtify of that Grace of God which bringeth Salvation, and to warn a careleſs World to flee from the Wrath to come: And therefore the Myſtery of Godlineſs ſaid here to be hidden from Ages and Generations, does not mean a total Concealment of it, but one comparatively ſo with reſpect to that greater Degree of Clearneſs in which Life and Immortality have been brought to Light by the Goſpel, according to thoſe Words of the ſame Apoſtle, ſpeaking of the Extent of this Myſtery, "which, ſaith he, in "other Ages was not made known unto "the Sons of Men, as it is now revealed "unto his holy Apoſtles and Prophets by "the Spirit." Epheſ. iii. 5.

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But if it was thus with the *Jews*, that moſt favoured People; if Darkneſs was ſo upon the Face of the Deep, with regard to the Diſpenſation they were under, that they could hardly penetrate the venerable Obſcurity in which the Myſtery of their Salvation was wrapped up; what ſhall we ſay of the Heathen World? What, but that their Night was dark, and that their Lamp was dim indeed? The former had *Moſes* and the Prophets for their Guides, ſignificant Figures and Emblems, and many inſtructive Miracles and Providences, to ſerve as the Moon to give them Light in the Night Seaſon, and to reflect, tho' with a fainter Beam, the Glory of that Sun of Righteouſneſs which was haſtening his Courſe to riſe upon them with Healing in his Wings. But with the Latter it was far otherwiſe, for even the Light of this friendly Satellite was with-held from their Hemiſphere: To theſe was appointed no *Moſes* to conduct them thro' the Wilderneſs, no typical *Joſhua* to lead them into *Canaan*, no Form of Worſhip by Divine Inſtitution to give them myſtic Patterns and Repreſentations of heavenly Things, and no goodly Fellowſhip of Prophets to direct their View

thro'

thro' Shadows and Figures to ſubſtantial and ſpiritual Verities; and therefore the great Myſtery of Godlineſs, God manifeſt in the Fleſh to deſtroy the Works of the Devil, was to them a hidden Myſtery indeed, and the Darkneſs of their Diſpenſation compared to that of the *Jews* is repreſented by the Shadow of Death. But ſhall we here leave them as deſtitute of all Hope, as cut off from all Fellowſhip in the Myſtery of Grace and Salvation, and without any Ray or Glimmering of Light to direct their Steps thro' the gloomy Vale to the unknown God of Mercy?—We are not warranted ſo to do, for he that made the greater Light to rule the Day, and the leſſer Light to rule the Night, made the Stars alſo: The ſame Lord whoſe Mercies are over all his Works, and who hath declared Himſelf to be the God, not of the *Jews* only, but of the *Gentiles* alſo, left not Himſelf without Witneſs among the latter, for tho' He gave them not the Volume of the Book wherein the ſacred Truths of our Religion are recorded, yet He left open to them the Volume of Nature in which they might underſtand the inviſible Things of God, even his eternal Power and Godhead,

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by the Things that are made. In this inſtructive Book are written many great and glorious Truths relating both to our temporal and eternal State; nor is it hard to conceive how even the Vegetation of a Grain of Corn, by which the Apoſtle ſo aptly illuſtrates the Reſurrection of the Body, might poſſibly lead the attentive and pious Obſerver to the Knowledge of that Doctrine: Nay, highly credible it is, that the whole viſible Creation bears Witneſs to the Divinity of that eternal Word which gave it Being *, holding out to us in that Analogy which ſubſiſts between Things natural and divine many ſignificant Emblems of redeeming Love †. But ſtill it muſt be confeſſed, and that with the moſt profound Gratitude on our Part for the gracious Diſcovery, that moſt of the important Points relating to our Redemption are only attainable, as to the diſtinct Knowledge of them, by Revelation, particularly, that wonderful Inſtance of Divine Love,

* *In toto mundo lucet Trinitas* — a Trinity ſhines thro' all Nature—is a Maxim aſcribed to *Zoroaſter* the *Perſian*. See his Fragments by *Le Clerc*.

† Thoſe Words of the Apoſtle where, ſpeaking of the Goſpel he ſays, *Which was preached to every Creature which is under Heaven*, if literally tranſlated, will run thus, "Which was preached in every Creation under Heaven." *Coloſſ.* i. 23.

the

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the Incarnation of the Son of God by a Virgin: This being contrary to the Order of Nature, could not be learned in Nature: The wiſeſt among Men could not be led to the Knowledge of this wonderful Nativity by any leſs Light than that of a miraculous Star: This was a Myſtery hidden from all Ages and Generations of the Gentile World; it was a Knowledge too wonderful and excellent for them, they could not attain unto it. But yet as they were not left deſtitute of all outward Light, ſmall as it was, ſo neither were they without an inward Teacher; and indeed without ſuch a one to ſend Truth home to our Hearts with a practical Influence, all that we gather by the help of Reaſon, either from Books or Obſervations on Nature, are no better than ſhadowy Repreſentations of Truth, and like thoſe deluſive Images that float in the Brain of him "who dreameth that he "eateth, and behold, when he awaketh, "his Soul is empty." Now that *Jeſus Chriſt*, as that Truth and Grace of God that bringeth Salvation, hath communicated Himſelf in a meaſure to all the Children of Men, to a Poſſibility of Salvation, is a Truth founded on Goſpel Teſtimony, and

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anſwers well to that friendly Character given to Him, the glorious Son of Righteouſneſs, as that Light which lighteth every Man that cometh into the World. He is the compaſſionate Voice of God calling out in every Heart, as aforetime to *Adam*, and ſaying, O Sinner, Where art thou? What haſt thou done! O how great is thy Miſery! He calleth them to Judgment at the Bar of Conſcience, that they may be convinced of Sin, and ſtand Self-condemned for it; and then He calleth to them in a Voice of Mercy, Pardon and Grace — "Come "unto me all ye that labour and are heavy "laden, and I will give you Reſt." Indeed He telleth not his Name to all, as He told it not to *Jacob* when he bleſſed him: But if they come to Him as the Light and Love, as the Grace and Peace of God, He will give them to partake in the Bleſſedneſs of his Nature; for He "who died "for all," and ſo became a ſufficient "Propitiation, not for our Sins only, but alſo "for the Sins of the whole World," is loving and gracious to all that call upon Him: And to the End that we might neither doubt of the Extent of his Mercy, nor yet of the high Privilege of Believers, He

Gen xxxii. 29.

1 John ii. 2.

hath

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hath declared Himſelf " the Saviour of all " Men, but eſpecially of thoſe that be- " lieve." To the Former, *viz.* to the *Gentiles*, who are obedient to the heavenly Call, He is the Wiſdom and Goodneſs of God in a hidden Myſtery; to the latter He is the Revelation of the Myſtery, as is fully declared in the Verſe of the Text in Connexion with that which follows. " The " Myſtery which hath been hid from " Ages and from Generations, but now is " made manifeſt to his Saints; to whom " God would make known what is the " Riches of the Glory of this Myſtery " among * the Gentiles, which is *Chriſt* in " you the Hope of Glory."

1 Tim. iv. 10.

Shall we then ſay, That all who have not heard the Sound of the precious Goſpel of *Chriſt* with the outward Ear, nor received it in the Way of Man's Miniſtry, have neither Lot nor Part in this Matter? Let it

* It will be difficult to aſſign a ſufficient Reaſon why the *Greek* ſhould be tranſlated here *among* the Gentiles and not *in* the Gentiles, ſeeing that the Prepoſition ἐν has the ſame Power before Ἔθνεσιν [Gentiles] as before ὑμῖν [you] in the following Part of the Sentence; and as an inward *Chriſt* is predicated of in both Places, in *Them* as the hidden Power of God to the Poſſibility of their Salvation; in *You* as manifeſted to be that Foundation whereon is built your Hope of immortal Glory.

not

not be ſo ſaid; for then muſt we ſay, that the precious Blood of *Chriſt* loſes more than Half its Virtue; that by this dreadful Limitation by far the greater Part of Sinners was decreed to periſh, and that Judgment hath triumphed over Mercy—Then muſt we ſay, that Grace hath not abounded as much as Sin, and that the Second *Adam* hath done leſs for the Salvation of the human Race than the Firſt *Adam* did for its Deſtruction; and laſtly, we muſt ſay, in flat Contradiction to the Scriptures, that tho' by the Offence of the latter Judgment came upon all Men to Condemnation, yet by the Righteouſneſs of the Former the free Gift came *not* upon all Men unto Juſtification of Life.

But how can the free Gift belong to thoſe that know it not? Be it anſwered; as Salvation does to Infants, who have the Grace tho' they want the Underſtanding of it: And that as the Heathens are involved in the ſad Conſequences of the Fall, without knowing the Source of their Malady; ſo do they ſtand in the Grace of *Chriſt* tho' they know not Him thro' whom it cometh. By this they are led to the one true God and Father of all, for "no Man com-

John xiv. 6.

"eth

" eth unto the Father but by the Son:" And their Works done in this Grace are accepted of the Father in the Beloved, as were the Prayers and Alms of *Cornelius* the Gentile before he had the Goſpel preached to him; for in this way alone, *viz.* thro' *Chriſt*, he that feareth God in every Nation, and worketh Righteouſneſs, is accepted of Him; " neither is there Salvation " in any other, for there is none other " Name under Heaven given among Men " whereby we muſt be ſaved." Let not then the Children of Faith boaſt themſelves, becauſe of their high Privilege, againſt the Children of Mercy who have not attained to their Faith, for tho' the latter on Account of their Inferiority be eſteemed but as Dogs, if compared to thoſe who ſit down to Meat with their Lord, yet they feed on the Crumbs that fall from his Table; nay, if they are faithful to the one Talent given them, He will own them for his Sheep, tho' of another Fold; their Faith in the one true God, tho' they know not his Diſtinction of Perſons, and their earneſt Deſire of Acceptance thro' Mercy, will penetrate the Heart of the Son who is in the Boſom and Eſſence of the Father, and He will be to them

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Acts iv. 12.

John x. 16.

them a Saviour: And foraſmuch as the Perſons here ſpoken of are ſuppoſed to have been in a Diſpoſition gladly to embrace the Goſpel Tidings of great Joy, had they been called to that bleſſed Privilege, ſo will they appear as ſwift Witneſſes in the Judgment againſt all ſuch Infidels as, in the Light of a Goſpel Day, have neglected ſo great Salvation, and rejected the Counſel of God againſt themſelves, thro' an evil Heart of Unbelief.

But if they may be Partakers in the Fellowſhip of the Myſtery of Grace who attain not to the Knowledge of it, what Advantage then have Believers over Unbelievers? Much every way; for to theſe are committed the lively Oracles of God, which are profitable for Reproof, for Correction, for Inſtruction in Righteouſneſs: Theſe have the inſtituted Means of Grace; the Life of the Holy *Jeſus* for their Pattern, all that He hath taught, done and ſuffered, for the Confirmation of their Faith, Hope, and Charity; and they have alſo a fuller Miniſtration of the Spirit of Grace for their Growth in Godlineſs, and Fellowſhip with the Houſhold of Faith for their Edification and Comfort: Sufficient Cauſe then have

Believers

Believers to be thankful for that diſtinguiſhing Grace of God which thus maketh them to differ, tho' nothing to Glory in as of themſelves.

But it may be aſked here—How are we concerned in this Subject? And what have we to do with them that are without? To this be it replied; that we are concerned both as Men and *Chriſtians*, under the Obligations of Humanity and Charity, to extend our Conſideration and compaſſionate Regard to thoſe that are allied to us in the ſame common Nature; and our pious Labours, by public Encouragement, to promote *Chriſtian* Knowledge among thoſe that have it not, confeſs them capable Subjects of Salvation, and not excluded, as ſome ſuppoſe, from the covenanted Mercies of God in *Chriſt Jeſus**: for were they under the total Dominion of Sin and ſpiritual Death, which is the proper Condition of fallen Man out of Grace, there could be no Help for them, and the Word preached could

* This Error ariſes from Miſtakes concerning the Nature and Extent of the Covenant of Grace, which is offered, tho' not manifeſted alike to all: And were any Perſons totally excluded from the Benefit of it; in that Caſe, they would only differ from Devils as Devils incarnate; nor could they ſtand in any Relation to this World as a State of Probation.

not

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not profit them: If *Chriſt* be not in them as a Seed of Grace and Power unto Salvation, they muſt then be Reprobates; the outward Teſtimony of *Jeſus* could not then be received inwardly into their Hearts by Faith, and our Preaching and their Hearing would be altogether in vain: But if the contrary be allowed, then let if be believed, that the merciful, omnipotent God who has not bound Himſelf to the Uſe of Means, can find Acceſs to the Spirit of his Creatures without them, or that He will provide others in the Room of thoſe which we hold to be, only generally, not univerſally, neceſſary to Salvation. When the diſeaſed Woman ſought her Cure from *Jeſus* thro' touching the Hem of his Garment, ſhe found it in the Uſe of the Means which her Faith had ſuggeſted to her: And when the Centurion anſwered our Lord, ſaying, I am not worthy that thou ſhouldſt come under my Roof, but ſpeak the Word only, and my Servant ſhall be healed; according to his Faith, ſo it was. Theſe Inſtances are, doubtleſs, recorded, not only to exemplify the Power of Faith in theſe two Gentile Believers, but alſo the unconfined Power of *Chriſt* to help and heal his poor ſinful Creatures.

Secondly,

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Secondly, This Doctrine may ſerve to mortify the Pride of the *Phariſee* and nominal Profeſſor, who, on Account of their external Privileges and Advantages, appropriate to themſelves the Favour of God, and deſpiſe others: But as St. *Paul* told the *Jews*, that the Uncircumciſion of the Gentile, if found in Righteouſneſs, ſhould judge the Circumciſion of the tranſgreſſing *Jew*, foraſmuch as he only was the accepted *Jew* which was one inwardly, and the true Circumciſion that of the Heart: So may it be ſaid of thee and thy Baptiſm, O thou boaſting Profeſſor! What, tho' thy Name be *Chriſtian*, yet if thou thyſelf art carnal, and liveſt to the World and the Fleſh, thy Religion ſtands only in the Letter, and the ſpiritual Heathen ſhall judge thee alſo! Be not then high-minded but fear.

Laſtly, This Doctrine is of Uſe to juſtify the Ways of God to Man, and to exalt the Praiſe of the Great Redeemer, in that, by a Diſplay of Goodneſs commenſurate to his Power, He hath extended his loving Kindneſs to the utmoſt Limits of his Creation *, that every Mouth may be ſtopped,

* Nay, it is a Doctrine which brings Glory to God, and Joy to all that can receive it, That the Energy of when

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when the Lord ſhall declare in Judgment to the Soul that dieth— "In Me was thy "Help— but thou haſt deſtroyed thyſelf."

In this View of *Chriſt's* comprehenſive Grace and Love we ſee thoſe Heathens left without Excuſe, who when they knew, or might have known God, yet glorified Him not as God: Who forſaking the Guidance of that heavenly Ray which beamed upon their Souls thro' the Obſcurity of their State, followed the Deluſions of their own Imaginations, and the Wiſdom of a vain Philoſophy, by which they knew not God, and ſo their Underſtanding was darkened, and they given up to the Confuſion and Errors of a reprobate Mind. Say then, O ye fooliſh and ſelf-beſotted Heathens! How will ye clear yourſelves when you are judged, of all your filthy Superſtitions, your groſs Idolatry, your vile Affections, your execrable human Sacrifices, and other your abo-

Chriſt's redeeming Power extends even to this material Syſtem, and will one Day free it from that Evil, Diſorder, and Vanity, under which it now groaneth and travaileth thro' the Curſe of Sin, and wholly deliver it from the Bondage of Corruption into that heavenly Temperature and Purity of its paradiſiacal State which is compared to the glorious Liberty appertaining to the Bodies of the Sons of God. See *Rom.* viii. 20, &c. 2 *Pet.* iii. 13.

minable

minable Practices? Did the Light of Nature, or rather the Light of God in Nature, teach you this? Charge not your Maker thus fooliſhly and falſely, for our God is holy, and therefore cannot tempt nor lead to Sin: Or will you have to plead that you were left in the helpleſs Condition of your fallen Nature, reprobate to all Good, neceſſitated to Evil, and ſo ſealed under Wrath by a Decree that altereth not? Neither will this Plea be admitted in your Juſtification, for a Seed of a heavenly Life and Nature was ſowed in your Hearts, by which God was not only near to every one of you, but allied to you, by the Confeſſion of your own Poets, calling you his Offspring: And in this near Relation, had you ſought after Him you might have found Him: Beſides, this good Seed in ſome amongſt you took Root, ſprang up, and bore much good Fruit: Now this divine Myſtery hidden in you, and afterwards preached to many of you, was that Light, Love and Grace of God which bringeth Salvation, and given you to be the Reformer and Changer of your Nature: To this Saviour, tho' not revealed by Name, ſhould you have turned, that He might pardon

Acts xvii. 28.

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your Offences, make you a clean Heart, and renew a right Spirit within you; But you turned from your true Light into the Darkneſs and Deception of your own Reaſonings, and here the Prince of Darkneſs laid hold on you, and ſo the Things belonging to your Peace were hidden from your Eyes: Say not then, that your Diſeaſe was incurable, and that an irrevocable Sentence of Death had paſſed upon you, whilſt the peculiar People, the outwardly Choſen, had ſtolen away every Bleſſing, for the Tree of Life groweth on either Side of the River of God, and tho' its pleaſant Fruit be the appointed Food for them, yet the Leaves of the Tree are for the healing of the Nations.

Rev. xxii. 2.

But here let me turn aſide one Moment to you who continue in worſe than heatheniſh Infidelity under Advantages of Means and Light which the Gentiles had not; for tho' the ſame Lord who is loving to every Man gave them ſufficient to leave their groſs Ignorance without Excuſe, yet He who divideth his free Gift ſeverally to all in ſuch Meaſure as to Him ſeemeth good, nor giveth Account to any of this Matter, hath beſtowed on you more than a

double

double Portion; for you have not only the hidden Myſtery in common with them, but the Revelation of the Myſtery; you have the Teſtimony of *Moſes* and the Prophets, of *Chriſt* and his Apoſtles, beſides many Calls and Invitations from the Mouths of his Miniſters, loud and preſſing: If then you will not hear your God ſpeaking to you in the ſmall ſtill Voice, nor yet in his written Word, hear Him at leaſt in the Voice of the Trumpet, for the Goſpel hath ſounded even unto the Ends of our Land in this your Day of Viſitation, nor hath it ſounded altogether in vain, for many have obeyed the Call.—Beware then that it ſound not in vain to you, for if it does not ſerve to convince, it will condemn. But we know you well, ye Sons of Reaſon, in your full Strength, and have weighed every Argument and Plea you have to offer for your Infidelity in the Balance of the Sanctuary, and found them wanting: Give us, you ſay, a Religion which we can comprehend, and Doctrines which will quadrate with our Reaſon, and we will believe them, but as to theſe unintelligible Myſteries we cannot away with them: But herein you err not knowing your own Weakneſs, in

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that you set up a Sufficiency as of yourselves whereby to judge and determine concerning the deep Things of God; but as soon may you hope to mete out the Heavens with a Span, or to gather the Wind in your Fist, for these Things knoweth no Man of himself, but God revealeth them to us by his Spirit. Reason can indeed speculate upon the Works of God in the Creation, and frame Arguments and Conclusions from such ideal Knowledge, but the Things of the Spirit of God the natural Man, even of the greatest and most improved Abilities, as such, cannot receive them, nay counteth them Foolishness, for there is an infinite Disproportion betwixt his Faculties and these Objects, and therefore an utter Impossibility to discern supernatural Things but by a supernatural Light: Consequently, all Religion that has no deeper Foundation than in the Reasonings of the earthly Understanding must be attended with Doubts and Dissatisfaction, as wanting Evidence and Influence sufficient for the Mind to rest on with any tolerable Comfort: All that Men build hereon is no better than a Babel of Opinions and Conjectures, and all their Zeal and Knowledge in Religion but walking

walking in the Light of their own Fire and in the Sparks that they have kindled. Will you admit of no Myſteries in Religion? Then you muſt live and die without any; for whether you conſider God in the Methods of his Providence, or in the Works of his Creation, his Judgments in both are unſearchable, and his Ways paſt finding out: But are you deſirous to believe and to be made Partakers of the Myſtery of Godlineſs, "that you may know with all Saints "what is the Length and Breadth and "Depth and Heighth of the Mercies and Love of God in *Chriſt Jeſus?*" Behold, the Work is half done; only caſt out that Pride, and the Love of thoſe Sins which indiſpoſe you for Faith, and truſt in the Lord with all your Heart, and lean not unto your own Underſtanding, and the Father of Lights will cauſe the Light of Life to ſhine in your Hearts, which being received in Humility and the Obedience of Faith, gives the Knowledge of the Glory of God in the Face of *Jeſus Chriſt*, for them that are meek will He guide in Judgment, and ſuch as are gentle them will He teach his Way: So will He fill you with Joy and Peace in believing, and the Spirit of Truth

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will reſt upon you. And this introduces the laſt Head, which was to ſhew how the great Myſtery of our Salvation by *Jeſus Chriſt* is made manifeſt to us.

Tho' it be a great Bleſſing to have the ſacred Scriptures in our Poſſeſſion, as they are a profitable Means of Knowledge and a precious Teſtimony to that Eternal Word who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, yet the written Relation of what we are to believe and know of Him, without the Revelation of it to our Hearts by his Spirit, is not ſufficient to make us wiſe unto Salvation: And therefore St. *Paul* to the *Epheſians*, prays, that "the God of our Lord "*Jeſus Chriſt*, the Father of Glory, might "give unto them the Spirit of Wiſdom and "Revelation in the Knowledge of Him, "that the Eyes of their Underſtanding "being enlightened, they might know "what was the Hope of their Calling, and "what the Riches of the Glory of his In-"heritance in the Saints." For want of turning to God in Prayer, and an humble teachable Diſpoſition for this Manifeſtation of his Spirit, it was, that the *Jews* ſtuck in all the perplexing Uncertainty of a literal Knowledge concerning the Meſſiah,

for

for tho' they had the Words that ſpake of Him, yet they knew not Him of whom they ſpake, the Vail being upon their Hearts when they read the Law and the Prophets, and therefore their Eyes were blinded; and the ſame Vail remaineth until this Day untaken away, in the reading of the New Teſtament, from the Hearts of all who read the Scriptures as they did, and ſuch Knowledge, be it of a *Chriſt* to come, or of a *Chriſt* already come, availeth not to the ſaving of the Soul: But what the ſame Apoſtle ſays concerning *Iſrael, Nevertheleſs, when it ſhall turn to the Lord, the Vail ſhall be taken away*, is equally applicable to us: If we turn to Him who is the true Light, then in his Light ſhall we ſee Light, and He will open our Underſtanding that we may underſtand the Scriptures: *Now*, adds the Apoſtle, *the Lord is that Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is Liberty:* that is, *Jeſus Chriſt* is the Source and Giver of this Spirit of Wiſdom and Revelation, and all they that are fitly prepared to receive it, are thereby ſet at Liberty from every Bondage that keeps the Mind in Darkneſs, whether they be vain Reaſonings, doubtful Diſputations,

2 Cor. iii. 16.

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the learned Criticiſms of Man's Wiſdom, or other unprofitable Speculations concerning Truth; for being *Chriſt's* Diſciples indeed, they have that Promiſe fulfilled in them, that "they ſhall know the Truth, and "the Truth ſhall make them free." And as the Spirit of the Lord enlarges the Capacity of the Soul by bringing it into a glorious Freedom for the Contemplation of Divine Truth, ſo does it by an aſſimilating Power, bring us into ſpiritual Union with Him who is Truth itſelf, and ſo we become joined to the Lord in one and the ſame Spirit: And therefore the Apoſtle, ſpeaking of the Conſequence of this Liberty, ſaith in the following Verſe: *We all with open Face beholding as in a Glaſs the Glory of the Lord, are changed into the ſame Image from Glory to Glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.*

This Divine Light opening to the Underſtanding the Knowledge of the Scriptures; and this ſpiritual Union with the Light ſhining in our Hearts to give us "the Knowledge of the Glory of God in "the Face of *Jeſus Chriſt*;" are ſet forth by St. *Peter* in the following Words: *We have alſo a more ſure Word of Prophecy, where-*

whereunto ye do well that ye take Heed, as unto a Light that ſhineth in a dark Place, until the Day dawn, and the Day-Star ariſe in your Hearts.

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2 Pet. i. 19.

That by *the more ſure Word of Prophecy* in this Place we are not to underſtand the bare Letter or literal Senſe of the Prophecy, but the Interpretation of it as given by the Spirit of Wiſdom and Revelation, appears from the two following Verſes: *Knowing this firſt, that no Prophecy of the Scripture is of any private Interpretation, for the Prophecy came not in old Time by the Will of Man, but holy Men of God ſpake as they were moved by the Holy Ghoſt:* Giving us hereby to underſtand, that the Knowledge of the Scriptures ſtands not in Man's Will or Wiſdom, and that no leſs than the ſame Divine Teacher who gave the Prophecies, could give unerring Clearneſs and Application in the Knowledge of them; and conſequently, that no Man's private Opinion or Judgment, however eminent for his Learning and Sagacity, is of ſufficient Authority in this Matter; for without this Heavenly Inſtructor we may read the Law and the Prophets to as little Purpoſe as thoſe *Jews* and their Rulers are ſaid to have done,

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Acts xiii. 27.

done, who knew not him who was the Subject of thoſe Writings, " nor yet the " Voices of the Prophets which were read " every Sabbath Day."

But then this *more ſure Word of Prophecy*, tho' it be an inward Divine Teſtimony to the Truth of the ſacred Writings, and, as ſuch, a more convincing Evidence than an audible Voice, or any other Report of the Senſes, yet as the Seat of its Operations is Man's natural Underſtanding, therefore the Apoſtle ſpeaks of it, *as a Light ſhining in a dark Place*, eſpecially when compared to that far more glorious Manifeſtation of *Chriſt* in the Soul, which he deſcribes by the *Day-dawn, and the Day-Star ariſing in the Heart*, and ſo ſhining more and more unto the perfect Day. Here the Word of God's Truth co-operates with the Word of his Power, and with the Word of his Grace, both to the Illumination and the Sanctification of the Soul. The former may be conſidered as a Divine Light reflected to us from the Teſtimony of the inſpired Writers; this, as an Emanation of Glory direct and immediate from the Fountain of Light within us, inſomuch that they who are brought into this happy Expe-

Experience can ſay, as the Men of *Samaria* did to the Woman of their City: "Now "we believe, not becauſe of thy Saying, "for we have heard Him ourſelves, and "know that this is indeed the *Chriſt*, the "Saviour of the World."

John iv. 22.

To conclude: Great and glorious to the ſpiritual Eye (tho' a Stumbling Block and Fooliſhneſs to that which is carnal, both then and to this very Day) was the Opening of the Great Myſtery of our Salvation by *Jeſus Chriſt*, in the Aſſumption of our Human into his Divine Nature, that He might fulfil the Law, as the Subſtance of its Shadows, the Accompliſhment of its Prophecies, and the full Satisfaction of all its Demands, both as to Sin and Obedience: Yet, if we conſider this Myſtery in all its Parts, this was but the Middle of it; for, He who appeared under the Law as the Angel of the Covenant, and was figured under its various myſtical Repreſentations: He who in the Fullneſs of Time appeared in a Body of Fleſh to fulfil all Righteouſneſs, and to perfect that which before was but in Part, having finiſhed all that the Father had given him to do in his Miniſtry here on Earth, when He gave up the Ghoſt, He was thenceforward to be manifeſted

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manifeſted in Spirit and Power; and accordingly our Lord told his Diſciples juſt before his Departure, that it was expedient for them, that He ſhould go away, that as the Bridegroom had been preſent with them in the Fleſh, He might for the future abide with them in Spirit—"At that "Day ye ſhall know, that I am in my "Father, and you in me, and I in you." Thus, as the Lord had a Work to do for us in the Day of his Humiliation; ſo had He a Work likewiſe to do in us after his Glorification, to manifeſt Himſelf to us in and by the Spirit, to enlighten, comfort, and ſanctify our Hearts, that we might be a holy Temple in the Lord, an Habitation of God thro' the Spirit: And this Adminiſtration of the Spirit and Power of the Goſpel was firſt manifeſted in the Way of a publick Diſpenſation, on the Day of Pentecoſt, when the Diſciples were filled with the Holy Ghoſt. This is that ſpiritual Marriage or Union betwixt *Chriſt* and his Church, that Fellowſhip of the Myſtery to which we are now called, even *Chriſt* in us the Hope of Glory; not that it firſt took Place after our Saviour's Aſcenſion, for Salvation was always ſpiritual, and could

John xiv. 20.

not otherwiſe be, but in other Ages it was a hidden Myſtery, not made known unto the Sons of Men as it is now revealed by the Spirit. But to whom is it revealed? Not unto the World, not unto thoſe that live in the Wickedneſs, Vices, and Vanities of it; not to Mockers and Scoffers, who ſpeak evil of the Things they know not, and corrupt themſelves in thoſe Things which they naturally do know; nor yet to thoſe that hold the Truth in Unrighteouſneſs, or who having a Form of Godlineſs, deny the Power thereof; to theſe it is not given to know the Myſteries of the Kingdom, for their Eyes are blinded, that the Light of the glorious Goſpel of *Chriſt*, who is the Image of God, cannot ſhine unto them: But this great Myſtery of Godlineſs is made manifeſt to the Saints, to them who *have an Unction from the holy One, and* therefore *know all Things* needful, and are ſanctified thro' the Word of his Truth: To theſe it is given to hold the *Myſtery of Faith* in a *pure Conſcience*: for they have Fellowſhip with the Father of Lights, with whom is no Darkneſs at all: And as they abide in the Grace and Love of *Chriſt*, He doth love them, and manifeſt Himſelf unto them; and

1 John ii. 20.

John xvii. 17. 1 Tim. iii. 9.

John xiv. 21.

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and so they have Fellowship with the Son: And forasmuch as they all walk together in the Light and have the same Spirit of Peace and Love ruling in their Hearts, they *have Fellowship one with another, and the Blood of* Christ *cleanseth them from all Sin.*

1 John i. 7.

To this Fellowship of the Mystery, even the Blessed Communion of Saints, begun in Grace on Earth, and perfected in Glory for ever in Heaven, may God of his infinite Love in Christ Jesus, *thro' the Power of the Holy Ghost, bring us all*— Amen.

SERMON X.

The Nature and Distinction of the Two Covenants.

JEREM. xxxi. 33.

This shall be the Covenant that I will make with the House of Israel after those Days, saith the Lord; I will put my Law in their inward Parts, and write it in their Hearts, and will be their God, and they shall be my People.

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GOD'S Dealings with Mankind in reference to their Salvation are set forth to us in the sacred Writings under the Name of Covenants. The Law delivered to the *Israelites* by the Hand of *Moses*, as it was an external Rule and Directory, is called the Covenant of Works: the Gospel Dispensation, as it is the Free Gift of God in *Jesus Christ*, and the Ministration of his Spirit operating by an inward

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ward Divine Power on the Soul, is called the Covenant of Grace: "By Grace are we "saved thro' Faith, and that not of our- "selves, it is the Gift of God." Thus, as the outward "Law was given by *Moses*, so "Grace and Truth [in the inward Parts] "came by *Jesus Christ*." This Covenant of Grace which bringeth Salvation is spoken of by the Prophet in the Text, as a Dispensation then future; and St. *Paul* calls it the New Covenant: But both the one and the other speak thus only with regard to its Accomplishment and Ratification by the Blood of *Christ* the Mediator of it, and as it was not made known in other Ages to the Sons of Men as it is now made known, either in Clearness of Revelation, Extent of Promulgation, or the Measure of its Vouchsafements: But with respect to its Virtue and Efficacy it was not new at the Time they spake of, but more ancient than the Law, nay prior to the Expulsion of our first Parents from the Garden of *Eden:* And therefore it will be needful to go back to this early Period, in order to form a right Judgment of the Covenant of Grace, and so to consider it in its threefold Dispensation.

Eph. ii. 8.

John i. 17.

Heb. viii. 8.

First,

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Firſt, As it was given to *Adam* and *Eve*:

Secondly, As it was confirmed with *Abraham*:

Thirdly, As it received its full Accompliſhment under the Goſpel.

To the Divine Prohibition given to *Adam* concerning the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil was annexed the Denunciation of the fatal Conſequence of Diſobedience—*In the Day that thou eateſt thereof thou ſhalt ſurely die.* But *Adam* and *Eve* did eat thereof, and in that Day they did ſurely die; for they not only became mortal or ſubject to a bodily Death, but they actually ſuffered a ſpiritual Death, by the Loſs of that holy, heavenly Life and Nature, in which conſiſted the Happineſs and Perfection of their State. *In the Image of God created He Man*, as a creatural Repreſentation of the glorious and ever bleſſed Deity: But Man divided his Will from God, caſt his Imagination and Deſire into a State of Self-dependence, and led by a fatal Curioſity became miſerably wiſe, thro' a diſtinct Knowledge of the Good he had loſt, and a ſad Experience of that Evil into which he had plunged himſelf. Nor

was it only in a dreadful Separation from God that the human Nature ſtood in the Hour of its Apoſtacy, but the wicked ſeducing Spirit alſo entered into it, and infected it with the Poiſon of his own helliſh Nature, and ſo it became Enmity againſt God. From the Time of this woful Covenant entered into by our firſt Parents with Sin and Death; from this unnatural Agreement with Hell and Hoſtility againſt Heaven, we date the Origin of Satan's Acceſs to the Souls of Men, and lament, among other diſmal Effects of the Fall, the many deplorable Inſtances of Perſons poſſeſſed of Devils inſtead of being Temples of the Holy Ghoſt, an Habitation of God thro' the Spirit.

In order to reſcue the human Race from this infernal Bondage, this Dominion of Sin and Satan, the ſecond Perſon in the ſacred Trinity gave Himſelf into our Nature to be the Redeemer and Regenerator of it, "that as in *Adam* all died, even ſo in *Chriſt* "ſhould all be made alive." He that gave the Promiſe of the Covenant—That *the Seed of the Woman ſhould bruiſe the Serpent's Head*, did at that Inſtant inſpeak the Grace of the Covenant into the Hearts of *Adam*

Adam and *Eve*, and it became in them the " ingrafted Word, able to ſave their Souls." Here, O Man! commenced the hidden Myſtery of thy Salvation, to be revealed outwardly afterwards in the Fullneſs of Time: Now the declared Enmity betwixt the Seed of the Woman and that of the Serpent began to ſhew itſelf, each ſtriving for thy Soul and to erect its Kingdom within thee: Theſe are the two Maſters which ſolicit thy Obedience, and one of them thou muſt ſerve, both of them thou canſt not—Look well then to thy Choice, for thou chuſeſt for Eternity; and look well to thy Recompence, " for the Wages of " Sin is Death, but the Gift of God is " eternal Life thro' *Jeſus Chriſt* our Lord." Behold! Thou ſtandeſt betwixt Heaven and Hell, as the great important Prize for which the Powers of both contend; the whole Creation is the Scene of this wonderful Diſpute, the Univerſe is in Suſpence, and Time only laſts till it is finiſhed. And canſt thou, O Man! who art the Subject of this mighty Tranſaction, be alone indifferent about the Event? For is it not for thy Life, even the Life of thy Soul? Canſt thou be content to caſt away this precious

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Gift of Grace, in which is contained thy Glory, thy Bleſſedneſs, and that for Trifles light as Air, nay, for that which will prove thine everlaſting Shame and Torment? Hear a God exclaiming at ſuch unnatural Stupidity: "My People have "changed their Glory for that which doth "not profit: They have committed two "Evils: They have forſaken me the "Fountain of living Waters, and hewed "them out Ciſterns, broken Ciſterns that "can hold no Water: Be aſtoniſhed, O ye "Heavens, at this!"

Jer. ii. 11, &c.

After what has been obſerved concerning *Chriſt* the Seed that ſhould bruiſe the Serpent's Head, even that incorruptible Seed or Divine Nature which is alſo called the Eternal Word or Son of God, who was afterwards "made of a Woman made un-"der the Law, to redeem them that were "under the Law," it is in our Way to offer to your Conſideration the following Particulars relating to the Nature of the Covenant of Grace.

And firſt, it was the free Gift of God, and therefore, as ſuch, does not anſwer to the Nature of thoſe Covenants or Stipulations betwixt Man and Man, which ſuppoſe a Power

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a Power in the Party that is to receive Benefit from the Covenant to qualify himself for such Benefit by the Performance of certain Conditions on his Part, for Man was no such capable Subject; he had lost all Power to Good, was in the Condition of an insolvent Debtor who had nothing to pay; in the Hands of his deadly Enemies, and so without Liberty; and upon the whole, emphatically poor, and miserable, and blind and naked: all that remained to him was the Power of being a Receiver, but such a one is ill qualified to be a Covenanter, for what we commonly term the Conditions of the Covenant, *viz.* Repentance and Faith, easy as they may seem, they are, if considered in an Evangelical Sense, the Gift of God, and Graces of it; and therefore of Necessity it was, that fallen Man must be apprehended of *Christ* before he could in any Sense apprehend Him *.

* If it be objected here, that all the Applications to Man in Scripture, to repent, believe, turn, *&c.* do suppose a Power in Man to correspond thereto: Be it answered; That we believe there is such a Power in every Man, but not of Man, not belonging to his own fallen Nature, but the Gift of God in *Jesus Christ*, a Portion of his Spirit of Grace, a Seed of Faith: To this every Call, Appeal, and Application is directed, as to that Power whereby the Man is enabled to receive and obey it; but that where, by long and obstinate Resistance to the Strivings of this good Spirit,

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Secondly, As Salvation is a free Gift, ſo is it free to all, for the Promiſe was made to our firſt Parents, and in them to all their Seed to perpetual Generations, without Limitation or Reſtriction: And the Covenant was eſtabliſhed in *Chriſt* the ſecond *Adam*, as another Parent of the human Race, in whom all the Nations of the Earth ſhould be bleſſed, and who ſhould be a quickening Spirit to regenerate in them that Divine Life and Nature which was loſt by the Fall, to give to as many as would receive Him Power to become the Sons of God. And to this End Grace was given to all, that all ſhould come unto Him that they might have Life, and to receive Grace for Grace. The Covenant being thus eſtabliſhed with Man in *Chriſt*, it has ſure Foundations, for all the Promiſes of God in Him are *Yea* and *Amen*, even the ſure Mercies of *David*, confirmed by that ſolemn Oath of the Great *Jehovah*, when He ſware by his Holineſs, that He would not fail

Pſ. lxxxix. 34.

the Grace is ſinned away, and this Power of Faith entirely loſt (which ſeems to be the Sin againſt the Holy Ghoſt—Lord keep us from it!) in this Caſe the Day of Viſitation is paſt and gone with reſpect to ſuch unhappy Perſons, the Goſpel is hid from them that are ſo loſt, and the Word preached cannot profit, not being mixed with Faith in them that hear it.

David;

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David: Now what other *David* [Beloved] was this than the Son of his Love in whom He was well pleaſed? Who but *David's* Lord, the Subject of his Song, and the God of his Salvation? To him he ſware, that his "Covenant ſhould ſtand faſt with "Him, and that his Seed ſhould endure "for ever."

And *Thirdly*, as this Covenant is both free and ſure, ſo is it exceeding precious; for the Son of God who is its fœderal Head and Mediator, is alſo the Sum and Subſtance of it, concerning whoſe fuller Manifeſtation afterwards is that Promiſe of the Eternal Father by the Prophet—"I will "give thee for a Covenant of the People," and to denote both his Ordination to it and the Stability of it, He is called "the "Foundation, the chief corner Stone laid "in *Zion*, elect and precious, on which "the redeemed ones are built up a ſpiritual "Houſe, an holy Prieſthood, to offer up "ſpiritual Sacrifices acceptable to God in "*Jeſus Chriſt.*" And as *Jeſus Chriſt*, the ſame Yeſterday, to Day, and for Ever, is the Virtue and Grace, the Foundation and Conſummation of the Covenant, ſo in Him is the Election, He being, in this his Of-

Iſa. xxviii. 16.

1 Pet. ii. 5, 6.

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fice for Man's sake, styled of God, His "Elect in whom his Soul delighteth:" And all his Servants who thro' the Obedience of Grace and Faith are brought into Union with him, are, by Virtue of that Union styled the Elect also: And no Wonder that they are honoured with so high a Title, who are dignified by so near a Relation to the Son of God; for by the Spirit of Adoption they can call God Father, and *Jesus* is "not ashamed to call them Brethren." Now so long as they continue to be of that Seed wherein is the Election, and to which appertaineth the Predestination to Eternal Life, so long are they dear Children, Heirs of the Covenant, and joint Heirs with *Christ*, theirs is the Mercy and Grace, theirs is the Pardon and Peace, theirs is the Filiation and the Inheritance: So long as they continue joined to the Lord in one Spirit, so long is He made unto them Wisdom, and Righteousness, and Sanctification, and Redemption. But then to put them in mind of the Possibility of their falling in this their probationary State *, as Man and An-

Isa. xlii. 1.

Heb. ii. 11.

* That there is a possible Degree of our Union with *Christ* here beyond the prevailing Power of Temptation, and all Danger of falling away, seems confirmed by many

gels

gels had done before, and that they be not high minded, but walk humbly with their God, they are bid to make their Calling and Election ſure, by abiding in Him who is the Root of their Election and of all their Graces; for "unleſs a Man abide in me, ſays our Lord, "he is caſt forth as a Branch, "and is withered;" and therefore He commands us to be "faithful unto Death, that "he may give us a Crown of Life." Thro' neglect of this Caution ſome who had attained to great Gifts and Graces, not ſtanding faſt in the Liberty wherewith *Chriſt* had made them free, have been entangled again with the Yoke of Bondage. If then we have obtained the like precious Faith, be it our Care, under Grace, that we be not of them who draw back unto Perdition, but of them who believe to the ſaving of the Soul; ſetting before our Eyes both "the "Goodneſs and Severity of God; on them "that fall away, Severity; but towards us "Goodneſs, if we continue in his Good- "neſs; otherwiſe, we alſo ſhall be cut "off."

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John xv. 6.

Rev. ii. 10.

Rom. xi. 22.

Scriptures: But that this high Diſtinction of Grace is the Bleſſedneſs but of Few, and thoſe among the moſt humble *Chriſtians*, is very credible.

Having

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Having thus glanced at ſome Particulars relating to the Nature and Origin of the Covenant of Grace, proceed we,

Secondly, To conſider it as an opening to a clearer Diſcovery of itſelf in the Call of *Abraham*, after obſerving by the Way, that altho' its Virtue and Power to Salvation co-extended with the whole Race of *Adam*, (for as the Judgment paſſed upon All becauſe of Sin, ſo did the free Gift unto Juſtification, in the Offer of it) yet its Manifeſtation as to the Fleſh, was continued on in one Line, down from *Adam* till the Word became incorporate in the Humanity of *Chriſt*, the Genealogy of which is given us by St. *Luke*, and may properly be called the Line of the manifeſted Covenant. St. *Matthew* traces it back no farther than to *Abraham*, as the ſecond remarkable Period of its Manifeſtation, it being renewed with him and revealed to him with peculiar Diſtinction, on which Account he was dignified with the honourable Appellation of Father of the Faithful: And as the Character of this Man of Renown is ſo intimately connected with the Hiſtory of this Covenant, and ſo explanative of it, it juſtly challenges our particular Attention.

The

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The Excellency of *Abraham's* Faith is the Glory of his Character, and this is too ſtrongly ſupported by well known Divine Teſtimony to need either Argument or Quotation from Scripture to evince it. It may ſuffice therefore to obſerve, that his Faith was more than a Belief of Aſſent to *Chriſt's* diſtant Incarnation, for the mercenary *Balaam* did foreſee and prophecy of that; but it was in *Abraham* the Subſtance of Things hoped for, an Energy of the Divine Spirit, or what St. *Paul* calls "The "Faith of the Operation of God," by which very *Chriſt* was manifeſted in his very Soul: He beheld with his inward Eye the Brightneſs of his Glory: *Abraham ſaw my Day and was glad* — is the Teſtimony of our Lord to the *Jews* concerning him; and had no more been meant by theſe Words than a remote View of his Humiliation and Sufferings, the Explanation of his Aſſertion in anſwer to their Query had not been pertinent — *Before Abraham was I am.* That *Abraham's* Faith therefore was as truly a Goſpel, juſtifying Faith, under the Seal of Circumciſion, as ours can be under that of Baptiſm, will admit of no Doubt: It was counted to him for Righteouſneſs, as

Coloſſ. ii. 12.

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as much as if it had been his own, for thro' his Union with Him who is the true Righteouſneſs, by Faith, *Chriſt* was made ſuch unto him, and being a Branch grafted into the good Olive Tree, he became Partaker of its Root and Fatneſs. In the Power of this Divine Faith, as its proper Principle, we ſee the Foundation of *Abraham's* exemplary Obedience: He ſtaggered not thro' Unbelief under the moſt trying Exerciſe of it, but "was ſtrong in Faith "giving Glory to God." Had he conſulted the fallacious Oracle of his Reaſon, it would much ſooner have taught him to diſbelieve the Truth of the Command than to obey it. What Arguments would it have ſupplied from the Pleadings of Nature and the Soundings of Bowels? What wiſe Diſtinctions, what ſubtle Subterfuges, what artful Evaſions would it have ſuggeſted in favour of Diſobedience! What, ſhed the Blood, the Blood of my Son, my Son *Iſaac!* Can the God of Mercy and Goodneſs enjoin an Act of Cruelty? Can the God of Truth give a Promiſe, and confirm it by the Birth of a miraculous Child, and then command me, the Father of that Child,

to

to defeat the Design of the Promise, by sheathing my Knife in his Bowels? Can the God of Faithfulness establish his Covenant with *Isaac*, and his Seed after him, and compel me to slay that *Isaac*, and so cut off all Possibility of Issue from him? It cannot be — Reason pronounces it absurd, impossible—Nature loudly exclaims against the horrid Act—All God's Attributes oppose the Execution—The Command therefore must have a figurative Meaning—I will substitute a Ram for a Sacrifice, and that shall be called *Isaac*. Thus ingenious is Reason to elude the Force of the Divine Commands when they cross the Bent of our Nature and Inclinations. What Salvo's, what Shiftings, what Composition, what Commutation will this crafty Casuist invent to bring us off, when some ruling Passion, some darling *Isaac* stands in the Way of our Obedience! We all know it, we have all experienced it. But when it pleases God to reveal his Son in us as He did in *Abraham* and *Paul*, we no longer confer with Flesh and Blood, for Faith then becomes sufficient for Evidence, and sufficient for Obedience; it puts to Silence the

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Gal. i. 16.

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the Cavils and Objections of our vain Reaſonings, diſſipates our Doubts and Fears, animates our Hope, invigorates our Love, and overcomes the World, the Fleſh, and the Devil: Thus thro' *Chriſt* ſtrengthening us we can do all Things: In Him we are Conquerors, yea more than Conquerors, for he addeth Triumph to Victory—Evermore, Lord, give us this Faith!

In this eminent Example of *Abraham* we ſee how Faith is the beſt Support and Security of good Works, and that theſe, in a Goſpel Senſe, are not to be eſtimated from the Matter of them, but from the Principle whence they flow: Accordingly the Wiſdom of our Church has rightly declared them to be the Effect and not the Cauſe of our Juſtification; as likewiſe, that a true ſaving Faith is founded in Grace, for that Man of his own natural Strength cannot prepare himſelf thereto: which well agrees with the Apoſtle's Doctrine, where, ſpeaking of the promiſed Inheritance, he ſaith, "it is of Faith, that it might be by Grace." Were a ſaving Faith nothing more than a bare Aſſent of the natural Underſtanding to outwardly revealed Truths, it would be difficult to diſtinguiſh it from a common

Rom. iv. 16.

Exerciſe

Exercise of the rational Faculties, and consequently difficult to justify St. *Paul's* Assertion, that we "are saved, *not* of ourselves," *&c.* But when we deduce Faith, with the same Apostle, from a Divine Operation in the Souls of them to whom it is given to believe, and so own it to be the Gift of God, a Grace of his Spirit purifying the Heart, enlightening the Understanding, and bringing us into a Covenant of Peace with God, thro' Him who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, we no longer marvel at the many excellent Things spoken of Faith in the Sacred Writings, but view it as that Instrument or Medium by which is ministred unto us an Earnest of those great and good Things wherewith all "they that "be of Faith are blessed with faithful "*Abraham.*"

But was this Covenant, given to *Adam* and confirmed with *Abraham*, so excelling in Dignity, so exceeding in Glory? How came it then that God entered into another Covenant with the Posterity of *Abraham?* Could any other be given which should surpass the Former, whether we consider it in its Ministration, its Mediator, or its Promises? For, what Ministration so rich

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as Grace? What Mediator ſo honourable and faithful as *Chriſt?* What Promiſes ſo precious as thoſe of Eternal Life and all ſpiritual Bleſſings in heavenly Places in Him? Is it God's Method of dealing with his Children, to give them his beſt Things firſt, and afterwards thoſe that are of leſſer Value? Or is it not his Way to abound in all Increaſe of Goodneſs and Loving Kindneſs towards them, giving them Grace for Grace, and leading them from Glory to Glory? What then ſhall we ſay of the Covenant of Works given by *Moſes?* Of a Law which, in the Miniſtration of the Letter, was eſtabliſhed on no better Promiſes than of temporal good Things; and Man's Title to theſe built on ſo hopeleſs a Foundation as that of his unſinning Obedience? If human Nature ſtood not in the Day of its perfect Strength, how ſhall Self-ability be Man's Security when his Strength is departed from him? Theſe Queſtions will be ſatisfied by opening the Nature and Intent of the Covenant of Works, which falls in as an Article of neceſſary Conſideration in this Place.

The Law given by *Moſes* does not argue any Defect in the foregoing Covenant con-

firmed with *Abraham*, for the Perfection of the *Jew* is frequently affirmed by St. *Paul*, to ſtand in his being an Heir of *Abraham's* Faith, his ſpiritual Seed, and as ſuch a Child of Promiſe; and therefore the Law given four hundred and thirty Years after could not be intended to diſannul the Covenant confirmed before of God in *Chriſt:* But here lay the Matter. The *Iſraelites*, tho' they were the People which God had choſen whereby to manifeſt his Wonders, and to anſwer many Purpoſes of the Divine Wiſdom and Goodneſs to Mankind, yet they were in general greatly depraved and corrupted, had loſt Sight of the Covenant made with their Forefathers, and departed from the Faith of their great Anceſtor *Abraham:* Being thus become earthly and ſenſual in their Apprehenſions and Affections, they could not be dealt with as ſpiritual; and as they no longer ſtood in that Faith whereby the Benefits and Bleſſings of that Covenant were to be received, they could no longer be treated with as proper Subjects of it: Therefore it pleaſed God, of his great Condeſcenſion, to communicate himſelf to them in a Way more level to their Capacity, and better ſuited to their Condition; to give

Gal. iii. 17.

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them an outward Directory for the Rule of their Actions who no longer walked in the Obedience of Faith; and to instruct their childish Minds in Divine Truths by the Rudiments of this World, till by this Pædagogy of the Law they should be led to *Christ* who is the End of the Law to them that believe, and so be fitted for the immediate Teachings of his Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation.

Gal. iii. 19. The Apostle tells us, that "the Law "was added because of Transgressions;" giving us hereby to understand, that this Addition only became necessary thro' Sin, and the Departure of the *Israelites* from the Obedience of Faith, for "the Law is not "made for the Righteous but for the Dis-"obedient." Had they continued stedfast in the Covenant made with *Abraham* in *Christ*, they had received *Christ* in their Faith, and would not have needed to be taught of the Law, for, says the same Apo-

Gal. iii. 25. stle, "After that Faith is come, we are no "longer under a School-master." Besides, *Abraham's* Faith in the Covenant received the Virtue of the Covenant, the Love of God; on which Account he has the high Honour of being called, the Friend of God; now Charity or Divine Love is the End of the Commandment, the fulfilling of the Law;

Law; he therefore who hath attained to the End, no longer wanteth the Means leading to it, for the Love of God being written in his Heart, it giveth Alacrity and Perfection to Obedience.

As to the ſpiritual *Jews* under the Law, *Abraham's* true Seed, who drank of the Rock *Chriſt* that followed them all the Way, they remained in Covenant with God in *Abraham's* Faith; they ſaw and uſed all Things ſpiritually, and the ſame Law which was a Pillar of a Cloud to the carnal *Jew*, was a Pillar of Fire to give Light to them: The Law paſſed upon them indeed externally, and they paid Obedience to it, but they were not under the Bondage and Condemnation of it, being juſtified by Faith. And therefore this ſpiritual and better Covenant, with reſpect to the outward Legal Diſpenſation, may be compared to a River running Part of its Courſe under Ground, and then opening itſelf a free Paſſage; even ſo the Myſtery of Godlineſs continued hidden for a Time under the Letter (tho' manifeſted to ſuch as were ſpiritual) till its full and glorious Diſplay by the Goſpel of *Chriſt:* The Law was not deſigned to interrupt the Progreſs of it, but was only an occaſional Diſ-

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pensation given because of the general Transgression of the *Israelites*, as *Saul* was afterwards given them for a King when they were no longer content with Theocracy: Nay, there was a friendly Agreement betwixt the Law and the Covenant that was by Faith in the two following Respects; first, as the Law on one hand condemned Sin, and all Imperfection in Obedience, that so the Sinner finding no help in himself might renounce all Trust in his own Works, seek for Justification thro' Faith, and so accept Salvation as the free Gift of God in *Jesus Christ*: Secondly, as Faith on the other hand was the Law's best Security for Obedience to it, and the true Interpreter of all its Services, Figures, and Promises, looking thro' its temporal Things that were seen, at those better unseen Things that are eternal. But considered independently of these its principal Uses, and only as it is in itself, the Law is no better than a State of spiritual Bondage and Death, the flaming Minister of God's Wrath, the dreadful Executioner of his Vengeance: But as these Points have been occasionally spoken to in the foregoing Discourses, it shall suffice to observe from the Allegory explained by the Apostle, that

Gal. iv.

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the Law, as ſignified by its Female Type *Hagar*, was a State of Bondage to thoſe that were under it in the following Particulars; Firſt, as it enjoined the Obſervance of many cumberſome Rites and Ceremonies that had no intrinſick Goodneſs [Statutes that were not good.] Secondly as it exacted a perfect Obedience under the Penalty of a Curſe without ſupplying any Strength for the Work, and ſo became weak (thro' Man's Inability) to ſecure its own Honour from Violation, or to help Man to receive any Benefit from it. Thirdly, as it freed not from the Guilt of Sin, "could not "make him that did the Service perfect as "pertaining to the Conſcience," and conſequently left him under Wrath and obnoxious to Puniſhment. Fourthly, as it gave no Freedom to Righteouſneſs, and conſequently left its Subjects under the ſame Vaſſalage to their Corruptions in which it found them, nay, indirectly gave Strength to Sin, by manifeſting both its Power and Condemnation, and ſo diſcouraging and diſabling the Sinner to reſiſt it thro' Deſpair to overcome it. This Weakneſs and Miſery of Man under ſo unfriendly a Diſpenſation may be conceived as figured to us

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Gen. xxi.

under *Hagar's* Diſtreſs in the Wilderneſs of *Beerſheba*—Her Bottle of Water could not hold out, her natural Strength failed, and ſhe muſt have periſhed, had not God opened her Eyes to diſcover a Well of Water: But what elſe was ſignified by this Well of Water than *Chriſt* the Well of Life, out of whoſe Abundance we muſt draw to fill our empty Bottles, that we faint not. Thus, what the Law could not do, thro' the Weakneſs and Unprofitableneſs thereof to Man's Salvation, that "the bringing in "of a better Hope did, by the which we "draw nigh unto God:" By ſo much was *Jeſus* made a Surety of a better Covenant. And this brings us to the laſt general Head, which is briefly to ſhew the Nature of that Covenant which the Lord by the Prophet promiſes to make with his People in the latter Days: *I will put my Law in their inward Parts, and write it in their Hearts, and will be their God, and they ſhall be my People.*

Heb. vii. 22.

And this is no other than the Covenant of Grace, or the Whole of our Redemption by *Jeſus Chriſt*. He was the Horn of Salvation raiſed up by the God of *Iſrael* for us in the Houſe of his Servant *David*; the

Subſtance

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Subſtance of the Mercy which He promiſed, the Accompliſhment of the Oath which He ſware unto *Abraham*; the Seed in which all the Nations of the Earth ſhould be bleſſed; that free Gift of God which is our ſpiritual Life, delivering us out of the Hands of our Enemies, and enabling us to ſerve Him without ſlaviſh Fear, not in the Oldneſs of the Letter, but in Newneſs of Spirit, in Righteouſneſs and Holineſs all the Days of our Life. The former Covenant, tho' containing a perfect Rule of Righteouſneſs, yet being in itſelf but a dead Letter, it could not give Life and Power for Obedience: "Had there been a Law "given which could have given Life, verily "Righteouſneſs ſhould have been by the "Law:" But as that could not be, the Covenant of Grace, as a Life-giving Diſpenſation, was neceſſary, that we might be juſtified by Faith thro' Sanctification of the Spirit unto Obedience.

It has been obſerved and ſhewed before, that the Epithet *New*, as applied to this Covenant in the Text, reſpects not its Origin but its Ratification and Difference of Adminiſtration only, and therefore is to be underſtood in the ſame qualified Senſe as

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uſed by our Lord where he ſays, "A new "Commandment I give unto you that ye "love one another:" The Command to love one another was old, but the Love here commanded, under the Meaſure and Extent of Chriſtian Charity, was new.

But it is Time to proceed to the Conſideration of that Diſtinction whereby the Covenant of Grace ſtands differenced from the Covenant of Works, as it is a *Law put into the inward Parts and written in the Heart.* How low a Senſe of ſo high a Promiſe is that given to theſe Words by ſome Interpreters, who expound them only of outward *Laws agreeable to the rational Soul.* The rational Soul of Man is the Soul of Man as he is fallen into Weakneſs, Sin, and Miſery, and not to be helped by any outward Applications propoſed objectively to the Underſtanding, without Light and Strength communicated from Above to render them efficacious. Man's chief Malady is ſpiritual, and ſuch muſt be his Remedy; and to direct him to any other is no better than ſaying to the Naked and Deſtitute— "Be ye warmed and filled, whilſt we give "them not thoſe Things that be needful." Let it not here be objected, that God gave

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to Man an outward Law which, according to this Doctrine, could not profit him; for He gave it him to make him ſenſible of his Miſery, that it might drive him to ſeek the Remedy He had provided for it.—The Law was his School-maſter to lead him to *Chriſt*. Nor, Secondly, let it be objected, that the New Teſtament contains many Rules and Precepts for Life and Practice, which are ſo many outward Laws, for theſe, conſidered independently of the Grace of the Covenant, can make no Part of the Covenant of Grace; they are only the ſubject Matter of that Obedience which iſſues from the Spirit of Life, and on which it is exerciſed, for all the Promiſes have reſpect to the Righteouſneſs of Faith, in which alone the external Obedience finds Acceptance, the Latter being, with regard to the Former, but as the Body to the Soul, the Letter to the Spirit, the Form to the Power: But as we read of the inward and the outward *Jew* under the Law, ſo under the Goſpel the ſame Diſtinction takes Place betwixt the ſpiritual and the literal *Chriſtian:* The latter keeps his Eye fixt on the preceptive Parts of the New Teſtament only, and ſo endeavouring to frame an Obedience thereto

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thereto in his own Strength, turns Gospel into Law, and brings himself under Bondage to it as a Covenant of Works: Hence such and so frequent mistaken Representations of Gospel Salvation, as if it were little better than a more complete System of Duties and good moral Rules *agreeable to the rational Soul of Man:* Hence such common Ignorance concerning the great Mystery of Godliness, *Christ in us the Hope of Glory:* And hence such learned Pains to explain away that most fundamental Doctrine, Regeneration, which is the Excellency, the Glory, the Substance of true *Christianity.* Let it here be noted, that as we have much of the Gospel in the Books of the Old Testament, so have we much of the Law in the Writings of the New, for both our Lord and his Apostles declare the Obligations, Threatnings, and Condemnation of the Law to the Impenitent, the Unbeliever, and to such as put themselves under the Law for Justification, as well as the Promises, Comforts, and Grace of the Gospel to all such as received it, or were in the Disposition to embrace it: But that the whole of our Salvation is by the free Grace of that Covenant which is the Gift of God in *Christ*, and

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and not by virtue of any Obedience that we can pay to the written Law, is the very Basis of Christian Faith: "The Law of "the Spirit of Life in *Christ Jesus*, says the Apostle, "hath made me free from the "Law of Sin and Death;" and he teaches his *Corinthian* Proselytes to ascribe their Conversion likewise, not to any outward Law or Teaching, as the efficient Cause, but to the same Divine Power working thro' his Ministry on their Hearts—"Ye are the "Epistle of *Christ* ministred by us, not "written with Ink, but with the Spirit of "the living God; not in Tables of Stone, "but in the fleshly Tables of the Heart." These, and a thousand other Testimonies of Divine Authority, added to that of the Text, evince Gospel Salvation to be the Effect of a Divine Energy working in us both to will and to do, a Covenant of Peace betwixt God and the Soul established in *Christ*, a spiritual Kingdom founded in Grace, a Law of Faith working by Love, written in the Heart by the Finger of the living God. King *David* was an inward and spiritual Man; he well knew that an outward Law could not change a corrupt Nature, and that no Knowledge and Obedi-

Rom. viii. 2.

2 Cor. iii. 3.

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ence of a poor fallen Creature, conceived in Sin, and shapen in Wickedness, could justify him before that holy God who requireth Righteousness and Truth in the inward Parts; and therefore it was the Matter of his earnest Supplication, that the Lord would stablish him with his free Spirit: And God granted that which he requested, for He put his Law into his Heart, and made him to understand Wisdom secretly: Hence he was enabled to declare from Experience, that the Law of God was perfect, converting the Soul; that the Statutes of the Lord rejoice the Heart, and that his Commandment is pure and giveth Light unto the Eyes. But what Law doth he here speak of? The outward Law? That cannot be, for it is not the Office of that Law to convert the Soul, nor by it can any Man living be justified: And what were those Statutes that rejoiced the Heart, and those Judgments that were more to be desired than fine Gold? They could not be those that were outward in the Letter, for in these were written the Condemnation of his Sins, and therefore as concerning them he saith in another Psalm, "My Flesh "trembleth for fear of thee, and I am afraid

Psal. xix.

Psal. cxix.

of

" of thy Judgments." The Law therefore thus ſpoken of was no other than the ſpiritual Law of Liberty and Love within his Heart, the Law of that Covenant in which were eſtabliſhed the ſure Mercies of *David:* And they were the Statutes of Life, the Word of God's Grace and Truth (in the inward Miniſtration of it) that rejoiced his Heart, and made him wiſer than his Teachers, *i. e.* ſuch as were appointed to be the Inſtructors of others in the written Law. Thus hath the God and Father of all, whoſe Name and Nature is Love, manifeſted his Light and Salvation to his Children in every Diſpenſation, inviting them to *Shiloh's* Streams, to drink of the Water of Life freely; and all who in Obedience to the Leadings of his Grace accept this Invitation of Love, are converted thereby from Darkneſs to Light, and from the Power of Satan unto God: He filleth their hungry Souls with good Things, giveth them to drink of the Brook in their Way thro' this Vale of Miſery, and refreſheth them with the Conſolations of his Spirit.

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Ezek. xxiii. 15.

To conclude with a farther Obſervation or two on the Difference betwixt the two Cove-

Covenants. Tho' the Way of Salvation by Grace thro' Faith is the same in both, yet the Revelation of this Grace by *Jesus Christ* in these two Dispensations is very different: Under the Law it was figured by mysterious Hieroglyphics and obscure Representations; whereas under the Gospel it is fully opened and clearly explained; add also, that in the latter we have greater Assistances, more useful Means of Grace, and that inestimable Benefit vouchsafed us in the heavenly Pattern of the Holy *Jesus*. But tho' these be precious Advantages of eminent Distinction, yet they constitute not the main essential Difference betwixt the Law and Gospel State; but they are opposed to each other as that which is inward and spiritual to that which is outward and natural; as God's Grace to Man's Self-ability; as a divine operative Faith to Works done in Man's own Will; as a new Creation in *Christ Jesus* to the old corrupt Nature derived from fallen *Adam:* And for want of making this Distinction it is so common to confound Law and Gospel in reading the Books of the Old and New Testament, and that Men do not see how the spiritual *Jew* in the Time of the Law

was a Child of Grace and a Son of the Free Woman, and that the literal, carnal *Chriſtian*, not led by the Spirit, is under the Law and a Son of the Bond Woman: Thro' attending to the outward Diſpenſation only, and not being ſubject to the inward Miniſtration alſo, ſo many read in the Hiſtory all that *Chriſt* did, taught, and ſuffered, without any real Benefit to their Souls, or knowing any thing of the Myſtery of Godlineſs, for all hiſtorical, nay and doctrinal Knowledge too, retained in Minds unſanctified, and without that Love of *Chriſt* which paſſeth Knowledge, profiteth nothing.

Laſtly, This Law of the Spirit of Life put into the inward Parts and written in the Heart, is the ſureſt Foundation of Obedience to all the Precepts and Rules of Holy Living laid down in the Goſpel, as well as the beſt Interpreter and moſt faithful Applier of them, for it begets in the Soul a Conformity to the Nature of the Thing commanded, which makes Performance both eaſy and pleaſant: It ſets the Soul at Liberty, not by freeing it from Obedience, but by making Obedience free: We are made willing in the Day of God's Power who

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who were unwilling in the Day of our own Weakneſs and Backwardneſs. The Prophet *Ezekiel*, on the Subject of *Chriſt's* Kingdom, pronounces the following gracious Promiſe of God: "A new Heart "will I give you, and I will put my Spirit "within you, and cauſe you to walk in "my Statutes, and ye ſhall keep my Judg-"ments and do them." Plainly ſhewing hereby, that the Renovation of a Goſpel Spirit is the only Security of a Goſpel Obedience; and that in all Things where we are commanded to fulfil the Will of God, we can then moſt truly ſay, we are content to do it, when his Law is within our Heart. This will be illuſtrated by conſidering the Legaliſt (whether he be called *Jew* or *Chriſtian)* and the Man of Grace, in their Religious Characters reſpectively. The former applies himſelf to the Work of Religion as to a Buſineſs, as to a Syſtem of Duties that muſt be performed in his own Strength, and ſelf-armed with his Reaſon, Reſolution, and Free-will, he ſets out as *Goliah* did to meet *David*, in full Confidence of Victory: But when he comes to the Trial, that which he before thought himſelf ſufficient for, he now finds too hard for him:

Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27.

him: The Sin of his Nature takes Occaſion from the Holineſs of the Commandment to ſhew its Rebellion and Enmity againſt God, and here he meets with an Oppoſition from within that he was not aware of: He returns to the Charge and renews his Efforts, but with no better Succeſs, for the Weapons of his Warfare are but carnal, and therefore alike inſufficient both for Victory and Defence; and the Law which he before conſidered as only commanding and forbidding outward Things, upon a nearer View makes manifeſt the Corruptions of his Heart, and condemns Sin inwardly in the Fleſh, and this ſlays his Confidence, and cauſes his Spirit to fail within him: His beſt Obedience therefore being only external, and both unequal to the Taſk and contrary to the Bent of unmortified Nature, he doth his Work not willingly, but of Conſtraint, and is in Bondage to his very Duties; for where the Form of Godlineſs is not enlivened by the Spirit of it, the Religion of ſuch a one is either Hypocriſy on the one hand or Slavery on the other.

But with ſuch as walk in the Way of Goſpel Salvation, and go not about to eſta-

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bliſh their own Righteouſneſs, but ſtand faſt in that Righteouſneſs which is of God by Faith, it is far otherwiſe; for theſe having their Hearts principled with Grace, they go forth, like *David*, in the Name and Strength of the Lord, and He ſubdueth all their Enemies under their Feet: They toil not at their Duties as at a Taſk, but walk in the Ways of God freely and cheerfully: They keep not his Commandments only becauſe they are written in the Bible, but they delight in them, becauſe they are written in their Hearts: They worſhip the Lord, not thro' Fear, as Bond Slaves, becauſe they dare not do otherwiſe, but as Sons, with a filial Affection: The Love of *Chriſt*, and not the Dread of Puniſhment, conſtraineth them, for they are led by his Spirit to pay a willing Obedience, and enabled by the ſame Spirit for the Performance of it: They do not ſingle out ſuch Duties as are moſt eaſy to Fleſh and Blood, or make the moſt ſplendid Appearance in the Eyes of Men, but have an equal Reſpect unto all God's Commandments, and ſo ſerve Him without Partiality and without Hypocriſy: And they complain not that their Work is too hard, or the Yoke of Religion too heavy,

for

for they are not under the Law which gives no Strength, but under that Grace which is ſufficient for them: In a word, a Faith working by Love animates the Whole of their Obedience, and their Hearts go along with it, and ſo they find of a Truth, that the Service of God is perfect Freedom.

Happy are the People that are in ſuch a Caſe, for they are the true Children of the Covenant, and have this ſure Word of Promiſe from the Lord, that he will be *to them a God, and they ſhall be to him a People:* And ſuch indeed He is to them in an emphatical Senſe of the Bleſſing; for He is to them a reconciled God in the Son of his Love, forgiving all their Sin, and healing all their Infirmities; the God by whom they eſcape Death, and the God of whom cometh their Salvation: He is the never-failing Spring of their Comforts, their Defence in Danger, and their Refuge in Trouble: And as He is to them a God, ſo are they to Him a People, a willing and faithful People, a loving and obedient People; a People in whom He doth all his Works, fulfils all his Will, and makes good all his Promiſes: In this ſo near and endearing a Relation how happy are they! God's Friends

are their Friends, and they have no Enemies but such as are Enemies unto Him: His Angels minister unto them, his Providence protects them, his Grace supports them, his Spirit guides them. What then have they to fear? Seeing that all Things thus ordered must work together for their Good, whether the World, or Life, or Death, or things present, or Things to come: Behold! All are theirs, and they are *Christ's*, and *Christ* is God's. Such Honour and Blessedness have all his Saints! *Hallelujah.*

THE END.